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GEORGE EDWARD ELLIS,

Seventh President of the Society.

Received September 13, 1895.

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Christianity and Secularism.

REPORT

OF

A PUBLIC DISCUSSION

BETWEEN THE

REV. BREWIN GRANT, B.A.,

EDITOR OF "THE BIBLE AND THE PEOPLE,"

AND

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE, ESQ.,

EDITOR OF "THE REASONER."

HELD IN THE ROYAL BRITISH INSTITUTION, COWPER STREET, LONDON,

On Six Successive Thursday Evenings, commencing Jan. 20, *and ending Feb.* 24, 1853,

ON THE QUESTION,

"WHAT ADVANTAGES WOULD ACCRUE TO MANKIND GENERALLY, AND THE WORKING CLASSES IN PARTICULAR, BY THE REMOVAL OF CHRISTIANITY, AND THE SUBSTITUTION OF SECULARISM IN ITS PLACE?"

Fifth Thousand.

LONDON:

WARD AND CO., 27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1853.

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THE PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

THE READERS of the accompanying Discussion will find in it frequent references to the correspondence between the disputants, which occasioned the debate. It was agreed by the two Committees, that the publication of that correspondence in this volume would have rendered it too expensive. There is the less necessity for printing the letters here, inasmuch as each of the debaters had already edited the complete correspondence in separate publications: to these the Reader is referred for any more specific information.

The Rev. Brewin Grant, B.A., has edited one publication of the correspondence as three of a series of twopenny "FINGER POSTS for Cross-Roads." [Ward & Co., London.]

Mr. Holyoake has edited the same at the same price, under the title of "WAYSIDE POINTS." [Watson, London.]

From these letters we extract the following leading points, for the information of the readers of the present volume.

One of Mr. Holyoake's friends wrote (June 16, 1852) to Mr. Grant, saying:—

"The friends with whom I act would like to bring Mr. H. in contact with some one of acknowledged ability, so that we might have 'a foot to foot encounter,' like the one Dr. Ackworth says he will have with him at Bradford. It occurs to us, then, that you are 'a fit and proper person' to engage in such a discussion; and if you would do so in this town, we would do all in our power to expedite the arrangements."

To this Mr. Grant replied a fortnight afterwards:—

"I should prefer discussing the value as well as the truth of Mr. Holyoake's whole mission, in some such theme as the following:—

"'What would be gained by mankind in general, and the working-classes in particular, as to this life, by the removal

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of Christianity, and substituting Atheism in its place? In other words, wherein consists the superiority of the Atheist's Gospel over the Gospel of Jesus Christ?'

. . . . . "Perhaps Mr. Holyoake would favour me with a statement of the advantages he maintains that Atheism would confer, and which Christianity opposes.

"For the advantage of due consideration, that we may not merely throw off at random statements that are immature, I should also request that the discussions be weekly, and that we have three of them; Mr. Holyoake commencing to maintain his propositions as to the benefits of Atheism, and I replying in equal time."

This letter being forwarded to Mr. Holyoake, he replied to the writer of it (July 16):—

"The first proposition you name as the subject of our debate, strikes me, upon the first reading, to be a useful one, with the change of one word. The proposition would then stand as follows:—

"'What would be gained by mankind in general, and the working-classes in particular, as to this life, by the removal of Christianity, and substituting *Secularism* in its place?'

. . . . . "You ask me if I would supply you with 'a statement of the advantages I maintain that Atheism (Secularism if you please) would confer, and which Christianity opposes.' I will endeavour to do this, but I should be much assisted if you would first inform me what are the principal points of Christianity which you are concerned to defend; for the features of Christianity are stated with important differences in nearly every discussion in which I take part."

Mr. Grant answered (July 27, 1852):—

"In reply to your inquiry, 'What are the principal points in Christianity I am concerned to defend?' I may state first, the New Testament in general, as the authoritative standard for Christians. Secondly, the general doctrines of 'the orthodox,' more especially of the Independents, with whose opinions you are well acquainted; excluding, however, election and reprobation, together with the supposed condemnation of all men for Adam's fall, which are founded on metaphysical views, and about which we are not agreed. Thirdly, the particular doctrines I am concerned to maintain, are chiefly:

"The Atonement, or God's mercy to sinners provided
igh the Redeemer;

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"The example of Christ, and all New Testament principles, as our rule of life;

"The Judgment of the world by the Saviour, and particularly of the hearers of Christianity by the law of Christianity.

"Of course this includes the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul, together with our responsibility. If there be any other doctrine not implied or expressed in the above, I shall be happy to give you my view upon it. And now allow me to inquire what you mean by *Secularism?* whether it is not the practical side of Atheism, an attention exclusively to man's temporal wants, to the exclusion of God, the soul, and a future existence?"

A temporary illness occasioned some delay in Mr. Holyoake's reply, who (on September 2, 1852) thus explained his positions:—

"Let the definitory affix accompany the proposition in my last; the whole standing thus:—

"What would be gained by mankind in general, and the working-classes in particular, as to this life, by the removal of Christianity, and the substitution of Secularism in its place?

"By 'Secularism' is meant giving the precedence to the duties of this life, over those which pertain to another world.

"The leading points with respect to Secularism, that I undertake to explain, are:—

"1.—That attention to temporal things should take precedence of considerations relating to a future existence.

"2.—That Science is the providence of Life, and that spiritual dependency in human affairs may be attended with material destruction.

"3.—That there exist (independently of Scriptural Religion) guarantees of morality in human nature, in intelligence, and utility.

"These, as you perceive, include the 'series of advantages I regard' as conferred by 'Secularism.'

"With respect to Christianity, I should advance these propositions:—

"A. The Atonement by the death of Jesus Christ is unsatisfactory as a scheme, and immoral as an example.

"B. The example of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament—the first is unsuitable for imitation; the second, unsuitable for guidance—except on the principle of arbitrary selection.

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"For the reason I mentioned, I am in some perplexity as to the opinions of any religious body; and it would oblige me if you would consider me quite ignorant of the 'opinions of the Independents,' and favour me with some brief abstract, or refer me to some manual of them which you accept."

Mr. Grant thus answered, September 6th —

"I may refer you to 'The Bible and the People,' in which my views on most topics of Christianity are pretty clearly stated, and by which I abide. The only things I know of, published by any general body of the Independents, are the Congregational Library and the Year Book. The Congregational Union has also published an outline of doctrines, not as authoritative, but as expressing the general opinions of our churches. The Bible is our only authoritative manual.

"In glancing over the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, I find that, excluding some that are ecclesiastical, and some that are metaphysical, together with some that are liable to misapprehension, though their general meaning is right; I could subscribe to the following twenty-one out of the thirty-nine, namely, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 38, 39.

"Out of these, and 'The Bible and the People,' and the New Testament, and the statements already made, I hope you will be able to find enough for your purpose. And now allow me to ask, what books or manuals you refer to as the authorised statements of Secularism, and your views in general?"

This inquiry as to the standards of Mr. Holyoake's opinions led to the following statements, dated (other letters intervening) October 15:—

"You ask 'what books or manuals I refer to as authorised statements of Secularism, and our general views?' I might refer you to half the books on Mr. Watson's list, in which you would find one or other of our principles stated. But the *positive* side of them is a more recent development of our own. Our party has so long been obliged to fight for the right to exist, that it has scarcely yet been able to put forth any mature utterances in this direction; and what we have done has been rather tentative and suggestive, than authorised. The prospectus of the 'Cabinet of Reason' will show you what we are endeavouring to commence in this direction. Two volumes of it

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have appeared. I may also refer you to my 'Rationalism,' 'Catholicism,' 'Philosophic Type of Religion,' 'Logic of Death,' 'Organisation of Free-thinkers,' and the twelve volumes of the *Reasoner* generally (especially the articles on Secularism in Nos. 323, 325, 327), as containing the most of our views."

On November 17, Mr. Holyoake wrote as follows:—

"I do not observe that *you* describe any of the advantages which Christianity, according to you, is to confer upon the working classes. Pray be good enough to favour me with *them*. In your letter of July 27, you mention the 'Atonement'—the 'example of Christ'—'all New Testament principles,' and the 'law of Christianity.'

"What do you mean by the 'Atonement?' Do you understand by the Redeemer's death an act for placating Deity, and if not, what was the purpose of that death? May I ask what you mean by the 'example of Christ,' and *which* are 'New Testament principles,' and *what* is the 'law of Christianity;' and is that law binding upon him who makes it as well as upon them to whom it is administered? You will oblige me by answers to these questions."

Mr. Grant replied, November 20:—

"The best account of the Atonement is in the New Testament; any view of it that you can fairly deduce from that book, I shall feel bound to maintain: there also you will find 'the principles of the New Testament,' after which you make anxious inquiries."

The Discussion commenced January 20, 1853, and was continued for five successive Thursday evenings.

Mr. Holyoake nominated as his Committee, Messrs. James Watson, Richard Moore, Austin Holyoake, and the Rev. Ebenezer Syme.

Mr. Grant's Committee were the Revs. J. Campbell, D.D., Robert Ashton, and Messrs. Samuel Morley, Samuel Priestley, and J. S. Crisp.

The Rev. Ebenezer Syme acted as Chairman for Mr. Holyoake, and Mr. Samuel Morley for Mr. Grant; the Rev. Howard Hinton being nominated as Umpire.

The proof-sheets of this Report have been read by both Disputants, and the Report is published with their joint consent.

27, *Paternoster Row*,
April, 1853.

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DISCUSSION,

&c.

THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 20TH, 1853.

MR. EBENEZER SYME:—Ladies and Gentlemen, I am requested by the joint committees to read the programme of the night's proceedings. The chair is to be taken at half-past seven o'clock. Mr. Syme is to act as chairman for Mr. Holyoake and to announce the subject of debate. I should add also, that Mr. Samuel Morley is to act as chairman for Mr. Grant, and the Rev. John Howard Hinton is to act as umpire. The subject of the debate is this:—"What advantages would accrue to mankind generally, and to the working classes in particular, by the removal of Christianity, and the substitution of Secularism in its place." Mr. Syme will also read the rules of discussion as follows:—To continue six Thursday evenings, beginning at half-past seven, and closing at ten o'clock. First, Mr. Holyoake to commence, and speak for half an hour; Mr. Grant will reply in half an hour; Secondly, Mr. Holyoake's second speech, half an hour; Mr. Grant's reply, half an hour. Thirdly, Mr. Holyoake's rejoinder, quarter of an hour: Mr. Grant's reply, quarter of an hour. If any difference of opinion arise between the chairman on points of order the decision of the umpire to be final.—You see then, ladies and gentlemen, what the subject of discussion is to be. It is very clearly and plainly laid down. Clearly, we are going to have a pitched battle. Both the speakers are able men, and both, I believe, are equally sincere. I for one am glad that the subject is to be brought before us in this form. It devolves upon me to introduce Mr. Holyoake as the first speaker; but this is a rather awkward position for me who am perhaps the most obscure man upon the platform, and totally unknown to the present audience, while Mr. Holyoake is very well

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known, and, as I may say, to use Scripture language, has obtained a "good report" among his friends as well as among those who are without. It is quite surperfluous for me to say anything to recommend Mr. Holyoake to you. I have known him for two years, and have had every reason to esteem him highly both in private and in public. I believe Mr. Holyoake to be more a truth-seeker than a partizan, else I, for one, however much unknown, should certainly have never stood by his side. But I may say I never stood beside any one in public with more pleasure than I do beside Mr. Holyoake to-night. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Holyoake will take this opportunity of bringing before you something like positive truth. I have mistaken him altogether if he will speak and debate merely for victory, and not for truth. If Mr. Grant be as ready to see the truth that is in Secularism as Mr. Holyoake, I am sure, is to see the truth that is in Christianity, we shall have a very pleasant and very profitable debate; and if it does not stand just in that form and shape between the two combatants, this discussion is not only worse than useless—it is a mere piece of quackery altogether. The two gentlemen who are to speak stand, I believe, on common ground. They will bring their respective tenets before you on the ground of reason, not falling back upon authority, taking the common ground which we can all discern. neither of them having an advantage over the other in that respect. With these remarks, as the time is limited to each speaker, and it would be improper in me to detain you longer, I shall introduce Mr. Holyoake to your attention.

MR. S. MORLEY:—Will you allow me for one moment, before Mr. Syme introduces Mr. Holyoake, to assure you that I have associated myself with Mr. Syme precisely in the spirit which he has indicated in the remarks he has made to you. I hope we are met to-night to listen to a straight-forward manly appeal to our reason. And in connection with that I have to make one request both to the gentlemen who are about to address us and to you who are the audience this evening. It is this—that the friends who are about to address us should abstain, as far as possible, from anything that can approach to personal feeling or reference, and that in any expression of coincidence of opinion, which it would be absurd to suppose you will not from time to time manifest, that also should be kept within the range of good feeling and good fellowship, in order to prevent irritation, and consequently perhaps loss of temper. I am sure you will excuse the suggestion, as I hope it will tend to promote the great object in view—the arrival at truth, and not mere victory.

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MR. HOLYOAKE:—Messrs. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. As it has been appointed to me to open our discussion each evening,—a task which I have neither sought nor avoided,—I shall address myself to such points as seem to me most necessary and most relevant; and for the information of Mr. Grant I hereby state, that I shall take the course which he has requested, and each night I shall consider in order one of the following propositions:—

First, The Nature of Secularism;
Secondly, Science, the Providence of man;
Third, Morals independent of the New Testament;
Fourth, The Death of Jesus Christ: its policy and its example;
Fifth, The Eclectical uses of the Apostolical writings;
Sixth,—on the last evening,—The General Advantages of Secularism itself.

There is, however, a misconception common to many who are auditors to-night which needs correction. Because of my general willingness to discuss with opponents, it has been assumed that I am bound to meet every person who may challenge my attention, without reference to my public duties or my private convenience. Because in a special work I have pleaded with the Clergy to countenance mutual discussion between their flocks and the people, and with the Philosophers to sanction it, it has been inferred that I am bound to enter the arena at the peremptory call of any minister, who after the sleep of years suddenly awakes in the spasm of debate. Whereas our resolution respecting discussion has been measured. We will not say, "Discussion is invited;" we have lately omitted this phrase from our placards, because the Clergy assume that we court them, and that we cannot win the public ear without the attraction of their presence. We do not say, "Discussion is permitted," because that to some seems to imply a condescension or an authority to withhold it. For a similar reason we do not say, "Discussion is allowed," because that to others seems to imply the right to disallow it; whereas discussion is the right of the public as a protection against dogmatic error, which so commonly creeps into unquestioned advocacy. We therefore state on our announcements simply, "The opportunity of discussion is afforded" after the lectures of our societies. Ministers may, if they see fit, avail themselves of such an opportunity; but beyond this provision we do not go, and we will count our advocacy ill-conducted if it cannot be sustained without the excitement of debate. Debate will be to us, we think, an advantage; but the "conspiracy of silence," so long adopted towards us, is also an opportunity to those who know how to use it. Secularists are

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misjudged because seen chiefly by the light of the pulpit traditions of free-thinkers; it will, therefore, serve the purpose of truth in this controversy if I explain the points on which they entertain opinions different from those which are ascribed to them. The Secularists are a party of persons whose self-possession has survived the antagonism naturally engendered in a long struggle for liberty in the face of intolerant laws, and a trying struggle for truth in the face of intolerant critics. But when tyranny had somewhat subsided, and reflection was possible, the conscientious Free-thinker found that as he had always been sincere himself, though misunderstood, no doubt the Christian was actuated by equally good intentions, notwithstanding his sometimes harshness of action. It is the misfortune of the best of men often to hide good feeling under repulsiveness of manner. You may find a hundred men who have the truth, for one who has mastered the art of making it agreeable. Under this conviction the Secularist applied himself to the reinspection of the general field of controversy; and the adoption of the following rules, among others, has been the consequence:—

First, To disuse the term atheist, since the public understand by that word one who is without God and also without morality, and who wishes to be without both.

Second, To disuse the term infidel, since Christians understand by that term one who is unfaithful or treacherous to the truth; whereas we are faithful to that which we consider the truth, and incur some disadvantages in its defence. We therefore object to those terms which have the effect of condemning us before we are heard, and causing the public to regard us with foregone disapprobation.

Third, To recognise, not as a matter of policy merely, but as a matter of fact, the sincerity of the Clergy and the good intention of Christians generally. We doubt not the truthful purpose of the prophets and the apostles, and the moral excellence of many passages in their writings; but we hold ourselves free to reject such tenets as seem to us to contradict moral facts or the moral sense.

Fourth, To seek the maxims of duty in the relations of man to society and to nature, and, as the *Christian Spectator* did us the honour to admit, "to preach nature and science, morality and art: nature, the only subject of knowledge; science, the providence of life; morality, the harmony of action; art, the culture of the individual and of society."

Various classes of persons are known for their dissent from the popular Christian tenets of the day. Some develope new notions of Prophecy; some reject the authority of Miracles, or explain

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them by the Rationalistic method. Some believe in the Inspiration of the moral portions of the Bible, and reject the sanguinary and other offensive passages, especially of the Old Testament. Some allege general objections to the inspiration of the Bible, and others question the dogma of the immortality of the soul; while an increasing party respectfully and deferentially avow their inability to subscribe to the arguments supposed to establish the existence of a Being distinct from nature. There are reasons why each of these methods in its turn should be pursued. You often meet with persons with whom the personal Existence of a special Providence, the Immortality of the soul, or the Infallibility of the Bible, is the particular avenue through which the light of reason, liberality, and the practical service of mankind, alone can enter. In these individual cases, these dogmatical avenues to the understanding must be opened by appropriate arguments. Many Christians believe that in the Bible which they would not believe in any other book, and they believe it because their understanding is first taken captive by Miracle and by Prophecy. The miraculous Conception, the Trinity, some parts of the Sermon on the Mount, would not be believed if read in the Koran; it has therefore often been found needful to debates the question of miracle and prophecy; and with particular persons it may be so again. But as far as the public are concerned another course might be taken, having wider application and conveying more instruction. We might bring more into the light those positive truths for which the criticism of the past has been making way. For wide and unmanageable propositions and a desultory warfare, perhaps indispensable to give us possession of material and ground to stand upon, we might substitute proportion of statement and definiteness of position. But in doing this we neither ignore the course others pursue around us, nor disparage the past; we only take additional steps, to occupy for more practical purposes the ground already won. We are not system builders; we disclaim the ambition, and we have no pretension to the philosophy necessary for the task. Besides, it seems to us that the people must take many steps before a new system will be useful to them. Bewildered already by arbitrary systems, and exhausted by the struggles to live, they will only listen to simple directions and practical guidance. The world does not want to know more; it knows already much more than it acts out. The over-riding desire of the poor man and the thoughtful man is to realize life. To this end we direc our exertions. Out of the man y principles which the penetration of our forefathers discovered, and their courage established, we select a few best adapted to present service. To announce new

utopias would be more grand; but to meet the need and advance the living interests of the hour is a truer contribution to the future.

Our precursory conceptions are to this effect. We believe in relative Truth and discretionary Silence; in Reason as a test; in Science as a power; in Service as a duty; and in Endurance as a virtue. And in Truth and Silence, in Reason and Science, in Service and Endurance, as we understand them, we seek Light and Law, Power and Repose.

We say "relative Truth," because the search after absolute truth is not successful; relative truth—agreement between a proposition and the reality it represents—seems all we are able to attain. We say "discretionary silence," because publicity without discretion involves premature utterances: instead of always serving it sometimes endangers the truth; it often endangers its advocacy, as when you "throw pearls before swine, who turn again and rend you." To keep back the truth when it can be serviceable is indeed a serious fault; yet to suffer it to be dragged forward to be destroyed is to betray the truth. It is a mistake of the poet to call truth immortal; it is killed before our eyes every day: prejudice and penal laws are constantly fatal to it. In the fair and open encounter truth may prevail; but Infantine Truth never had a fair encounter with Full-grown Error, and he who, without conditions, exposes it to unwilling ears and prejudiced minds, who seek its destruction, may be guilty of the murder of truth; and where this danger does not exist, to thrust it forward in season and out of season is to make it an offence. We therefore claim the right of discretionary silence. If the forces of Truth had been half as well commanded as the forces of Error have been, Truth would have triumphed long ago. We therefore claim the right of profiting by our experience and choosing when we will speak—to whom we will speak, and, out of all the truth we think we have mastered—how much we will speak.

We will suspend nothing that shall be needful to what we avow; our silence shall never contradict our speech; but we hope never to speak on any man's compulsion, but only at the dictate of our deliberate judgment. "Reason" is a test of truth in this broad and available sense. To reason is to try assertions by facts of conscience and facts of experience and testimony. That assertion which is sustained by the largest class of relevant facts is the most to be relied upon. There is a broad and practical protection in this view of the function of reason. It is on this account that we encourage men to trust reason throughout, to examine all things hopeful, respect all things probable, but rely upon nothing without precaution which does not come within the range of science and of experience. It is on the same account that we hold

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the fair, universal, and open discussion of opinion to be the highest guarantee of truth. Only that theory which is submitted to that ordeal is to be regarded. Since only that which goes through it successfully is to be considered as established. Now, by "Science" we understand the methodized and derivative power that human discoveries and philosophic patience have given to man for the amelioration and elevation of his condition; by "Service," the sentiment which helps man, which seeks to govern man through the promotion of his happiness, which seeks to compensate to the unfortunate the harshness of their destiny, and to raise the low to the level of the high; and "Endurance," we regard as the virtue which waits for the result.

We are not met but to discuss some of the principles of Secularism: and the essential peculiarity of our Society deserves mention, especially as many seem not to recognize it. Many of us are not able to believe in the existence of a Supreme Being distinct from nature; but we do not exact from members of Secular Societies an agreement in opinion on this theoretical question. We associate for practical purposes on the wide field of Secularism outside the abstract question of the existence of deity. Many of us do not hold the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul; but neither do we exact agreement on this point from our friends. We seek the co-operation of all who can agree to promote present human improvement by present human means. The existence of God, the Future condition of man, are questions which five thousand years of controversy have not settled; we therefore leave them open to the solution of Intelligence and Time; they shall not be with us barriers which shall divide us from our brethren; we will not embarrass human affairs with them. Morality, that system of human duties commencing from man, we will keep distinct from Religion, that system of human duties assumed to commence from God. This life being the first in certainty we give it the first place in importance; and by giving human duties in relation to man the *precedence*, we secure that all interpretations of spiritual duty shall be in harmony with human progress. It is in the same spirit that we maintain a general neutrality with regard to Christianism, and confine ourselves to the criticism of religious and sacred records, when and when only they contradict what we consider well-ascertained moral truth, or move men to impede what we deem rational progress. Our views, therefore, are Eclectic, Positive, and Pacific: "eclectic," because we select them "on Christian and on heathen ground;" "positive," because they affirm the leading practical truths which we hold; "pacific," because we esteem good-will as the first truth in advocacy. We think with Arnauld that it is a little thing that we have truth

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upon our side if we are constantly making it disagreeable to others. The summary of the first three principles, I shall on separate nights endeavour to maintain, is this.

First, our Secularist friends undertake to teach Secularism as the philosophy of the things of time. A Secularist is one who gives primary attention to those subjects the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life. The Secularist principle requires that precedence should be given to the duties of this life over those which pertain to another world.

Second, to teach that Science is the Providence of Man, and to warn men that absolute spiritual dependency in human affairs may involve material destruction.

And Third, to teach that there exist, independently of scriptural authority, guarantees of morality in human nature, intelligence, and utility.

Some will ask, what do I call myself in a religious point of view? The question is irrelevant in respect to this discussion, but it will save time to answer it. The Christian professes to give an historical account of the Origin of nature and of its government by an independent Being. I cannot accept this account; I have disbelieved it for many years, and I disbelieve it still. My statement of my heresy may not always have been happily rendered, it may not have been uniformly rendered; but throughout all variations it has meant this. For want of a better and more congruous term, I have with reference to theologians, used the term "non-theist." This term has the merit of expressing the rejection of dogmatic theism without implying the rejection of morality, which we are desirous of conserving. What some call atheism is in one sense suspensive in Secularism. We have always held that the existence of Deity is "past finding out," and we have held that the time employed upon the investigation might more profitably be devoted to the study of humanity. It ought not, therefore, to take the world by surprise that we sometimes propose to act upon our own advice, and devote ourselves mainly to those subjects which we consider most fruitful in practical results. A practical friend lately reminded us of a story he deemed applicable to us. One who had revisited the college where he was educated, and found the old professors still discussing abstract theology, was asked what they were doing, and the reply was: "One is milking the barren heifer, and the others are holding the sieve." We never meant this to be true of us, and we will take care that it is not. It is worthy of remark, that so long as we appeared to be occupying ourselves in this way, little notice was taken of us; but no sooner did we betake ourselves to the more practical aspect of our advocacy than a "mission" was bespoken against us. Our resolution,

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therefore, is taken to continue in that direction. We are encouraged in this course from a conviction that our special opinions touching the doctrines of nature will be best promoted by this course. The prevailing notions of theology do not appear to us capable of being maintained in argument. Great numbers of persons distrust all church accounts of the origin of nature, but acquiesce because they deem a belief in something of that kind needful for personal satisfaction and for the government of society. More than this, numbers of Theists are restrained from examining the opposite side on account of the immorality and disorganization, which in their opinion must ensue, if the truth of theism were shaken. No theoretical answer, however cogent, will have weight with this order of thinkers; nothing but practical results will make an impression upon them. For myself, I hold with Campanella, that truth is the foundation of all philosophy. It seems to me to underlie all virtue, all welfare; and whatever appears to me to be true I take for granted will work well. But the number of persons who have this implicit reliance on simple truth is by no means so great as the "friends of progress" commonly suppose. You must not only show a thing to be *true*, you must also show it to be *safe*, or very few will listen to you. It therefore happens, that the practical course we hope to pursue, while it appears to suspend our theoretical doctrine of nature, is the most likely course to advance it which could be devised. There are many of us who trace all religious evil to one root, and regard "the belief in a God as an Atlas of error bearing on its broad shoulders a world of immoralities;" and because *they* could trace a logical connection between this cause and the consequence they deplored they laid the axe to the great trunk, and thought if they severed *that* the tree would fall. I once thought with them, but experience has taught me differently. Religious error is like the Banyan tree: every branch has taken independent root in the soil of superstition, and must be cut through before the tree will fall. There are many trunks to sever, and we may take our choice. There is room for judgment, as well as constant opportunity of service. Men are seldom logical in their errors. You cannot reform the world by a logical *coup d'état*. You must be content to study men in groups, and meet their states of thought specially and patiently. It is on this account that we are turning our attention to Secularism, which not only realizes our earliest aims, but also meets the wants of that portion of our fellow-creatures whom humanity teaches us first to endeavour to serve. Two things are said by our opponents on learning this resolution of ours: first, that we are abandoning our objections to theism: secondly, that we are seeking to advance our principles by more

refined and subtle modes. Now, gentlemen, say which you please, but you must not say both at once; for it cannot be true that we are abandoning our principles, and at the same time studying new modes of advancing them. Those of us who are realists in theology are not abandoning our views, but are taking an open and honest ground of advancing them by proving that they are compatible with the service of the people. Our principles have disposed us to look for neutral ground of human duty, and by freeing us from Sectarian prejudice, have enabled us to occupy it. We will work with all who will work for the Secular welfare. We trepan no man. None who work with us for Secular welfare need think with us on other points. We deceive no man by offering to co-operate with any on temporal questions, and in seeking to serve all. Morality is the independent and neutral ground on which we both endeavour to meet.

MR. MORLEY:—It becomes now my duty to introduce to you the Rev. Brewin Grant; and in so doing, without, I hope, evincing any undue partizanship, I shall content myself with reminding Mr. Grant that his friends expect that he will do his duty.

MR. GRANT:—It is impossible for me to convey an adequate idea of the heavy weight of responsibility under which I commence, and with which I have anticipated this discussion, knowing as I do, that whatever others may say against our responsibility for belief, we cannot escape the consequences of our actions, and of those dispositions and opinions in which actions originate; believing, as I do, that if there be any human duty this is the first and foremost to seek the truth honestly, to inquire with fairness, and search with scrupulous conscientiousness. Whatever may be the carelessness with which we write or speak on other occasions, when we presume to guide or oppose others on important questions, there is a grave responsibility resting on speaker and hearer. When I consider the many readers who may ponder the words uttered, if there be any justice or injustice, if a man may benefit or injure another, if there be any social duty, there is no more sacred obligation than to refrain from all misleading, and to do all in our power towards helping men in those things in which we may do them the most harm or the most good. My anxiety is not on this occasion lest Christianity should be overthrown, that is settled in my own mind as an impossibility; I am anxious only that my fellow-men should not be misled into the rejection of that which I believe is for their benefit, the truth of which is not at all interfered with by their acceptance or rejection of it, but the acceptableness of which may be interfered with by the imper-

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fections of its professors, and by the unskilfulness of its defenders. The proper and best defence of Christianity is, that it be understood—as the best refutation of infidelity is an exposition of it, which, if truly done, amounts to an exposure. My main object, therefore, will be not so much to defend Christianity as to show you how often it has been misrepresented, and especially to show that secularism is not worth having, whether Christianity be continued or not, and that therefore no benefits can come from its introduction. It is enough to show this; and if in doing so I advance opinions for which secularists are not prepared, they have to consider two things; first, that I have carefully read and marked every page that has issued from the *Reasoner* Office, and therefore may be presumed to know as well as any one the proceedings and writings of that section of infidels. Nor is any original lecturer on Socialism better acquainted with the opinions of Robert Owen, from which Secularism sprung, than I am, and have been for the space of twelve years. Some opinions may therefore be advanced which, to those who look only at modified sentiments and statements, may seem extreme and unjust, but may still be very well maintained by unquestionable facts. Secondly, any who are surprised at some assertions are requested also to consider the possibility of my being able, after a consideration as extensive as they who believe in Secularism have given to the subject, to give a conscientious and intelligent opinion as to my conclusion on the matter. If I employ any epithets, let them not be taken as a reason for not examining whether the epithets are not just conclusions from previous arguments. Nor let it be set down as bigotry or personality, if I do not take the cheap professions of any men as to their justice or liberality, but proceed at once to disprove their pretensions. We make a grave mistake when, respecting matters of opinion, we speak of toleration or charity. We owe all men the justice (not the charity or toleration) of conceding all the liberty we demand for ourselves, according to the golden rule of Christianity, which need not be removed for freedom,' 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." If this be immoral or illiberal, it is my adopted rule of morality, and standard of rational freedom. But as to opinions themselves, if false we are to oppose them; they have no claim to charity, and justice consists in removing them by all reasonable means; whilst in relation to individuals we are to pursue a course of impartial justice. It is not illiberal to prove that some teachers are deceivers. It is bigotry to charge men with faults without proof: it is justice towards the leaders of opinion, it is justice and kindness combined towards their followers, to unmask whatever is deceptive; for they cannot be truly the friends

of any man, least of all the friends of truth, who are not the friends of honesty.

These remarks being general and applicable to both sides, will we hope, be satisfactory to those whose opinions we shall call in question. We hope to say nothing about either the advocates of infidelity or any other system that we shall not be able to make good; and all that is asked of those who differ from us is to consider, not whether they like what we say, but whether it is true. There may, perhaps, be a greater difficulty on the other side to satisfy those who believe in Christianity. If the Secularists were to search England through they could not find one who is more fitted to defend their views—perhaps no person has had so much training in debate as Mr. Holyoake. He has every advantage, and his friends must say that if he cannot defend Secularism nobody else can: whereas the Christian world abounds with better advocates than I can pretend to be—men of learning, ready utterance, sound research; and my only hope in this controversy is in the fact, that I know as well what the Secularists have printed as either its writers or its readers. I am not fit to touch the ark of God; but I can fill the idol Secularism with the produce of his own priests, till he fall to pieces with swallowing under pressure the sacred books of his devotees. I require only time to read extracts and draw conclusions, to bring Secular writers as witnesses against Secularism and against themselves. To do this with tolerable satisfaction to my own mind would require twelve nights instead of six. The time agreed upon, however, will enable me to display some of the blessings of the word Secularism, as implied in the definition, and two metaphysical abstractions called "benefits to the working classes in particular." The whole three appear very barren, but may have some mysterious charm in them, which would never be seen nor suspected at first sight, and can perhaps only be discerned by what in Scotland is called "second sight." If these are the first-fruits that reason has brought to the market after so many ages, we have not much reason to be very sanguine for the future, and therefore had better make the best of the present abortion. I am anxious that my aim in this discussion shall be understood at the outset—what I propose in relation to Christianity and Secularism.

I do not forget that we have a strong city with walls and bulwarks; nor do I aspire to the high office of leading and instructing others in the loftier themes of religion. This may with confidence, be left with those who, in a spirit of profound and deep philosophy, are more experienced and better acquainted with the height of that great argument—men who are able to exhibit the full power of Christianity, and the firmness of that ancient and still youthful

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structure,—these may point out the solid rock-work forming the base, the firm masonry rising above, whose cement has set for ages like liquid iron, first insinuating itself into every crevice, and then assuming its rigid state, locking in the embrace of an impregnable fortress all manner of stones and buildings which are there. It is for these more cultivated spirits from the retirements of a meditative life to display to the admiring gaze of disciples, whose faith is strengthened the more in proportion as they see further and understand more, the wonderful works of God. These may explain the harmony, strength, and grandeur of this temple of truth and city of the living God, as they walk about Mount Zion, tell all the towers thereof, and mark well her bulwarks. Mine is the humbler occupation of scouring the plain which leads to this city of habitation, to pursue and drive away the erroneous and strange wandering Arabs who annoy the travellers Zionwards, wounding some and capturing others that may have wandered from the close caravan of our marching churches, forgetful of the orders of their great Captain: to redeem those captives, and cover others from the darts of these nomadic tribes, to establish posts of defence and safety along the line of road towards the hope set before men in the Gospel, and to check the incursions of the turbulent and irregular bands who are united in no other purpose than a banditti warfare on all passengers along the King's highway. But now, behold they are encamped; they for once take a stand; they are building a fortress of their own; they will have a terrestrial city; its top will not reach unto heaven, because there is no such a place; and this adamantine supposition is the basis of the building. It will be adorned from the storehouse of Hadad-ezer, who had "exceeding much brass." They are at work with axes and hammers; the scaffolding is reared already, but the building is only "tentative." They are "endeavouring to commence" their Babel, and the confusion of tongues is amongst them. One calls for bricks, and another brings a "new development;" the plan is to be altered; they call a conference, and do a paper constitution; they mark out a new ground plan, after which to build up "the positive side," which by a miracle has turned up out of a negative; for though creation is impossible, since nothing can come out of nothing, yet they have made something of it; as denials are turned into affirmations, making logic a nullity, which declares that no conclusion can come out of negative premises. Thus do they overturn Aristotle, that the positive side may have a chance; just as a little time ago Communism put to flight political economy. Occurrences like these, in which men's heads must be turned, leave no room to wonder at the confusion of tongues; the only difference between this Babel

and the former one is, that the old Babel never got the roof on, and the new one has no foundation; one had no top, the other has no bottom. The labourers at this castle in the air indicate the confusion which reigns in the atheistic camp—for though the universe is orderly without a God, by chance, the chances are against anything similar on a small scale. Nature is a standing miracle, quite different from the course of nature in the sceptical microcosm, which is an instance of most admired disorder.

Let us, however, be accurate, for they will repudiate the term Atheistic, and prove from our use of it that we do not understand their sentiments. They are for progress, and to keep up with them makes us almost out of breath. It is positively some months since the term Atheist became obselete as Mr. Holyoake's watchword. The one who disbelieves in a God is not here to-night—that department of free thought is transferred to W. C. Atheism is an armour which Mr. Holyoake has proved to be unadapted to modern warfare; his old armour has been rusting three months; let those charge him with yesterday's opinions who forget that the world goes on, and that progress is the order of the day, and of the night also. This modern confusion of tongues is peculiar. The builders not only misunderstand one another, but the master-builders now and then forget themselves, and learn a new mother-tongue. Charles Southwell's imprisonment opened the eyes of Mr. Holyoake to the glaring fact that there is no God; but he has shut his eyes again to leave the question open. A blow received by Southwell affected Mr. Holyoake's organ of language, and he straightway spoke in the atheistic dialect; but when patient hod-men had learned this *patois*, and brought atheistic bricks to build the chimney as something "tentative," before the walls arise, the indignant answer is given in another dialect. Mr. Holyoake is surprised; he does not understand; his speech has again gone from him. He is no Atheist—it is a slander; as not long before he remarked it was ignorance to call him Deist; and he is not an Atheist now, for they have left that question open, that they may be able to get out. And still they build a system on the idea of no God and no future life, for their method is the exclusive attention to this life,—Secular, as opposed to spiritual, divine, and eternal. They do not now deny another life; they will not deny God theoretically, only practically, as being, if not less emphatic, less offensive. They attend to the present, leaving the other life and God open questions. In other words, they build on an opening, on the surface of a bottomless gulf, rearing to the clouds a magnificent edifice that rests on nothing. All this will be certainly obvious, as we follow the line marked out of definition and benefits—the defini-

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tion being an assumption, and the benefits being irrelevant metaphysical abstractions. Meanwhile, we may notice some few of those points with which we have been favoured, after which we shall enter upon some questions necessary for the right understanding of this debate.

I am glad to find Mr. Holyoake at the commencement of his speech state the line he intended to pursue, and that he agreed to the line that I laid down before. It would have been better, however, if he had told me this before the discussion commenced. Mr. Holyoake now says he is not open to the peremptory call of every minister. Does he forget that his call was first on me—that he came to me in my chapel at Birmingham, and gave me his objections, that I might answer them in the evening—that he came in the evening and watched me, and spoke of me in the *Reasoner* in a somewhat peculiar way? So that he is not forced into this discussion; he forced others, and now I am glad to learn that he finds discretion in silence. Mr. Holyoake says now that they will not say they *permit* debate. They said so but a very little time ago. The most extraordinary observations, however, were those which related to conspiracy. A conspiracy has been laid against the Secularists, or rather two conspiracies, one the conspiracy of silence, and the other the conspiracy of assailants. If we do not speak we are afraid; if we do we are "the Kersley Gladiator." If we maintain silence, it is the conspiracy of silence; if we speak, it is the conspiracy of assailants; so that whether we speak or are silent it is impossible to please. Secularists, they tell us, reinspected the field of controversy, and as the first result, they abandon the term "Atheist." This is mending their ways to commence with. They abandon also the term Infidel, as meaning one who is faithless to the truth, and they doubt not the faithful purpose of prophets and apostles. I wish Mr. Holyoake had said so before in his *Reasoner*, in which he often accuses them of different principles, as I shall show in the subsequent parts of this debate. He then comes to Secular maxims in relation to man and nature. Is there any one who denies any maxim of duty in relation to man and nature? Does not Christianity give the maxims of duty in relation to man and nature, when it says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and "there is none other greater commandment than this?" If you have any better principle of action between man and man we shall be happy to see it. They do not now ignore the past; they do not discourage the past; they only come here to substitute Secularism for Christianity. They select a few principles out of the past, as one method of expressing their abandoning and rejecting other principles. They believe in reason, in science, and

in truth. Let us not be deceived by such wide words. Are there any men who have ever come before the world who have not said, "We are for reason, we are for truth!" The question is, "What is reason? what is truth?" Mr. Holyoake need employ no time in proving that we have the right of discussion: we do not question here whether he has a right to speak, but whether he speaks right things. They do not exact agreement upon other questions, if we go with them in human improvement and practical matters. Then why do they come forward and oppose what they call theoretical opinions? The question of God, it seems, is not yet settled; it would be wise and philosophical to say, "not settled to my satisfaction"—it may be settled to the satisfaction of other people. But if you believe nothing that is not yet settled there are few things you can believe, for there are very few things that may not be questioned. A general neutrality is now held in reference to Christianity, except as it is opposed to rational progress. If Mr. Holyoake had told us what particular point of rational progress Christianity opposes he would have done something towards this discussion. Now he comes forward and says it is not *Atheism* he advocates, but *Non-theism*. *Atheism*, you must understand, is from the Greek "no," and *Non-theism* from the Latin "no;" that is all the difference, and I have no doubt this very nice distinction will be "all Greek" to some. That story of the barren heifer is one that is rather faded, like a great many other things. At the same time, Mr. Holyoake observed, they never meant that the story should be true of them. They might not mean it, but it may be true of them for all that. If they would but show us a pailful of good milk—not chalk and water—they might speak; but if they are charging us with "milking the barren heifer," and holding the sieve, while they are doing nothing, I think they might be better employed.

I hope "the working classes in particular" will never despair, after what they have heard Mr. Holyoake say. It is true, Robert Owen did much for mankind, besides calling us all fools, which was logically necessary to save his own credit, since either we were all irrational, or else he was not quite right. But Mr. Holyoake, who once swore by that Master, has now improved upon the teacher, and is going to see to the question himself. His simple agency is three propositions, which he says are verses from the book of nature; but he does not say what page nor what edition, but that it is a very large volume; so, perhaps, he will never be able to find the place again; that we may turn over the leaves, and see it for ourselves. It is said that Joe Smith found a book, which he never showed to anybody; and this was wise. True, Martin Harris was allowed to take some of the characters

or letters, which Joseph copied, for the inspection of Professor Anthon, saying that they were reformed Egyptian characters. It was evidently a gipsy story; but Anthon could see no character in them. They were worse than Greek to him, and seem to have been reformed "pothooks and hangers." Now, whatever may be the value of literal pothooks, real ones are very useful when we have anything to hang on them; but if you were to put in these three propositions, they would be as harmless as a chip in porridge. Mr. Holyoake, in our correspondence, was "afraid I expected something extravagant." It would be extravagant to expect anything from the professions of men who have only failed before. To understand the exact nature of the present discussion, it is necessary to be acquainted with the correspondence which led to it, as that limits the terms, and indicates the object. On this account, I hope that Mr. Holyoake will agree with the proposal to have the correspondence, as the preface to the discussion, in the printed report. There are two editions now before the public. The genuine original is "The Fingerpost" edition, though that sign has been imitated in the curious title of "Wayside Points," in which there seems some mixture of figure, as a cross between the railway points, and the old high road. If this be the point of it, the figure is deplorably out of character. Fingerposts, for cross roads, are very useful and appropriate, amidst the ambiguities of so-called free inquiry; but as all the practical principles of human duty are borrowed from Christianity, so, as a sign of plagiarism, the Secularists have imitated our "Fingerposts;" but in this case, as in the other, the imitation is a perversion and misapplication. We put up "truth and error," the latter being on the dark side. They have consistently stereotyped an assumption, prejudged the case, and put "Christianism" on the dark side; whilst they have assumed, further, that "Christianism" can be distinguished from Secularism, as far as regards the duties of this life. The most characteristic features of their art, however, is, the appropriate shape of their wayside point; for, whilst our fingerpost has two arms, of reasonable length, pointing along the road, theirs has enormously long arms, leaning downwards, as if requiring line props to keep them up—the true sign of a tumble-down affair; whilst the leaning of the hands downward, is a true sign of the system—that it points towards the ground, as it is of the earth, earthy.

But whilst this correspondence should be studied, as I hope it will be, by the audience, during the discussion, and by the reader afterwards, to understand the relevance of any line of argument entered upon, there have appeared some public contributions, which properly complete that correspondence, and should be taken

into account. The Rev. John Angell James, of Birmingham, writing to recommend the speaker for a mission to the working classes, declared that, though Mr. Holyoake had spoken with contempt of Carr's Lane Sunday-school, and his relation to Mr. James, he still wished well to the advocate of infidelity. This letter occasioned the following reply, on the part of Mr. Holyoake:—

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRITISH BANNER.

"Sir,—The letter of your venerable and distinguished correspondent, the Rev. John Angell James, has been read by me with great interest. I may smile at its strange statistics of free-thinking resources; but I am not insensible to the benevolent feeling which breathes throughout the letter—a feeling which I can appreciate, though I may deem it misdirected.

"Mr. James makes a passing allusion to my filial relation to my parents. He doubtless had that from one, whose severe truth is as striking as her piety and her affection. It is generous in him to notice what he might have suppressed. A kind word I never forget; and I thank him for recognizing that my opinions have at least not 'corrupted' me into forgetfulness of that gratitude, which every child owes to those who nurtured him in his helplessness, and defended him in his youth. I wish I could show, to Mr. James's satisfaction, that the same opinions will not 'corrupt' others. Let me tell Mr. James, that I am so far from looking back with 'contempt' on past relations with him, that I am disposed to pay great deference to the notice he has done me the honour to bestow upon me; and I will therefore say to him, what I would not say to members of that 'mission' he proposes: Why is it that we are still addressed as 'infidels,' though we are not so in the sense in which either the public, or Mr. James himself, understands that offensive term? Why does he speak of our views as 'Atheism,' while we choose another name, more truly expressing our convictions?

"The young minister has a position to win, and he proposes to make himself felt by obnoxious epithets—thinking that to make himself felt is to make himself a power. He mistakes harshness for faithfulness, and imagines that when he has denounced he has conquered, and that when he has irritated, he has persuaded. But the eminence of the Rev. Mr. James renders these arts as unnecessary to his distinction as they must be incompatible with the dictates of his wiser experience, which must teach him that the people will naturally ask, 'How can we expect the truth where we do not find courtesy?' The tone the *Christian Spectator* has late manifested towards freethinkers, would command the

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patient attention of a thousand auditors, who would not give half an hour to a biting sarcasm, and a nibbling logic.

"If the proposed mission proceeds on the assumption that we paint the Clergy as the enemies of the working class, it would do us injustice. We do not doubt the good intention of Christian ministers, though we dispute the wisdom of their means.

"If the 'Mission' assumes that we 'subvert the faith of the people,' it will fail. We do not 'subvert faith;' we systematize opinions, and direct practical issues which might run parallel with Christianity, if you would let them. But history will one day tell with astonishment, that in the hour when scepticism laid down its antagonism Christianity took it up.

"I have the honour to be,

"Your obedient servant,

"GEO. JACOB HOLYOAKE.

"*Manchester*,
"*Nov. 14th*, 1852."

The following letter also appeared in the *British Banner*:—

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRITISH BANNER.

"SIR,—Mr. Holyoake declared in your last, that he had never spoken with 'contempt' of Mr. James's Sunday-school, and expressed great admiration and respect for Mr. James, in order to exhibit bitterness to Mr. Grant, as one 'who had a position to win.' Mr. Holyoake has a position to lose: he inquires, How can there be truth where there is no courtesy? &c. Now, it is certain we may not look for truth where there are lies and hypocrisy. These are plain words: I flatter no man; that may be left to the *Christian Spectator*. Please to print the following Preface by Mr. Holyoake, to an insolent tirade on Mr. James's *Anxious Inquirer*, which Mr. Holyoake inserted in the *Reasoner* (No. 70, p. 527, vol. iii.) The following is a copy, and your readers may judge how far a mission is requisite to open the eyes of the working classes to the practices of these truth-seekers.

'"*Five years of my youth were wasted in the Sunday School of Carr's Lane Chapel.* Every Sunday once, and generally twice, during that long period, *it was* MY MISFORTUNE to sit under the Rev. Angell James, a believing *recipient of such* PERNICIOUS TRASH as that in the *Anxious Inquirer*, to which Mr. Chilton usefully draws attention. If ever I and the Rev. Angell James *meet at the bar of God, and justice is there afforded for those who have been* WRONGED *in life*, I shall *demand*, at the hands of the Rev. John Angell James, the *restitution* of the buoyant years of my youth, which he so *clouded* with melancholy, and idly 'anxious'

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thoughts. Next to THE EVIL *which I thus* SUFFERED, was the *misery inflicted* on many near and dear to me. Distinct before me, at this moment, are the agonizing expressions of those who believed or feared they had committed the redoubtable sin against the Holy Ghost. Without fear of contradiction, I venture the opinion, that if *the Holy Ghost has a particle of humanity* in him, THERE IS NO SIN AGAINST HIM LIKE WRITING ANXIOUS INQUIRERS. Devoutly thankful am I to stand where I do, looking down on the dangers, the traps, the gins, and pitfalls of evangelical piety, which I have escaped. Rightly did Shelley exclaim, "I WOULD RATHER BE DAMNED with Plato and Lord Bacon, *than go to heaven with Malthus and Paley*," or he might have added, WITH ANGELL JAMES. [That is, Mr. Holyoake would rather be damned than go to heaven with Angell James.] If in Birmingham, I should think it my duty to distribute a copy of Mr. Chilton's article [on the Anxious Inquirer] to every member of Mr. James's congregation, and to the teachers in the Sunday-school. I hope some friend will do it to the Sunday-school teachers, as a *matter of conscience*, to save them, not only from the wrath to come, but from the wrath that is come, wherever Anxious Inquirers have gone. I shall send Mr. James a copy. ED.'—*i. e.* George Jacob Holyoake.

"The above is word for word; and I ask you if it is not infamous, and whether Mr. Holyoake can pretend to truthfulness after this, and his letter of last week.

"THE YOUNG MINISTER."

MR. HOLYOAKE:—Mr. Chairman, Now that Mr. Grant has amused himself by the speech he has just made—I hardly suppose he intends to call that discussion—I shall proceed with two things: to deal briefly with what he has said, and further to explain the case which it is my duty to place before you. With regard to the addition of the correspondence (it is the business of the committee to determine where it shall appear), he has my consent to its appearance as a preface to the published report of these proceedings. He thinks that because we have put Christianism in the shade, we have prejudged the case. Have we done any more than he did himself in his opening speech, where he told us he was satisfied that the overthrow of Christianity was "impossible?" Surely he has prejudged the case in this controversy in a pretty decided manner. There are various terms which he has seen fit to apply towards ourselves. That language I am not going to reciprocate. Mr. Grant has told you that I have had some experience in controversy; I have: and my experience is this—that that kind of language neither advances the

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truth, nor good feeling, nor does any credit to those who employ it. Now, he has read to you a correspondence between myself and the *British Banner*, concerning the Rev. John Angell James. The comments which he read to you concerning the *Anxious Inquirer* were written at a time when I was, I think not unnaturally, concerned at various expressions which Mr. James himself had used with regard to my friends and my opinions. In No. 87 of the papers published in the City Road by the Tract Society, he has an article upon "Socialism," and he begins with this language, "Call it not Socialism, call it devilism;" and Mr. James proceeds to show that drunkenness and all sorts of crime are the consequences of the dissemination of Socialism. As I knew all this to be untrue, as I believed Mr. James to be wholly mistaken, and as his *Anxious Inquirer* was written in the same strain, I did write about it, as Mr. Grant relates, those words of disparagement; and I have no wish to conceal my opinion upon that subject. But I mean to say this, that I wrote about it more in sorrow than in contempt; and of Mr. James himself, or of my past relations with him, I have never spoken with contempt, although Mr. Grant opened his letter by saying so; and when Mr. James alludes to me with some kind feeling, I respond to it with that courtesy which is due to him under the circumstances, and which is always due from a young man to an aged pastor. It was the first time since I left Mr. James's school that he had ever noticed me with kindness, and I certainly felt pleased to show him that, however widely I differed from him in opinion, I was not unmindful of the respect due to one who had earnestly advised me in my youth to the best of his judgment. Now this was conduct on my part one would have thought a Minister of the Gospel would have approved of, especially as Mr. James is Mr. Grant's superior in the same church. Instead of this our "Young Minister," who appears to be Mr. Grant himself, calls me coarsely a liar and a hypocrite. Thus, when dealing with Mr. Grant, courtesy is construed into an odious offence; and you are made to feel that it is first a misfortune to know an Independent Minister, and next that his own colleague will call you "infamous" if you treat him with respect. Now, as the *British Banner* published that letter, and a second one which Mr. Grant will probably read, without reproof, it would seem that this is the accredited way in which we are to be converted to Independentism. Apparently the same writer, the "Young Minister," under the name of "Philo Brewin," speaks of the correspondents of the *Reasoner*, who had merely expressed their gratification at the tone of fairness of the *Christian Spectator*. This "Philo Brewin" declares these persons to be men full of "insolence and

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self-importance." This wanton outrage is made upon men his seniors, and as respectable and as well conducted as Mr. Grant himself. Thus at one moment Mr. Grant will tell you that we are rude, and in the next he makes every form of good feeling an offence. Mr. Grant may fancy that he will in this way approve himself as a missionary, but he will only thus propagate a new dislike of Christianity by such a course.

We are met for the explanation of the proposition, "That attention to temporal things should take the precedence, both in time and in importance, of considerations relating to a future existence;" this is the first proposition which I have to explain and support. That which pertains to this world, which relates to human life and welfare, which can be tested in time, by facts of nature, experience, and consciousness, is what is meant by the term "Secular." We would go to the facts of this life for the duties of this life. Christianity moulds human duties to suit the prospects of another life. We consult simply the requirements of our present state. Secularism would make human duty independent of another state of existence. I am not indifferent to the consequences of human conduct. On this head we are as careful as the Christian, but we see reason to take a different course in order to secure it. The earnest Christian regards this life as a temptation drawing him away from the contemplation of future world-truths; we, on the contrary, regard this world, and its wise and pure realization, as the condition of desert with respect to another state of existence. I tell Mr. Grant, as I told Mr. Townley, that the future is not the property of Christians alone; we claim some insight into it as well as themselves. The King of Death throws open his wonderful empire to all the human race, and unfolds its solemn gates as wide to the pauper as to the king. When one passes through into the terrible solitude of eternity, where none can appear by proxy, none can take second-hand opinions to present. When a man goes, as it were, to confront destiny, and submit, it may be, to the interrogations of the Eternal, he must stand dumb unless he has thought for himself. Nothing can sustain him but the habit of independence; nothing can give him courage but innocence; nothing can support him but the integrity of his convictions. It is on this account that we, without arrogance and without fear, seek to walk by that light which seems to us to display the path of duty. Why we prefer the Secular to the spiritual sphere is this—that experience seems to us entitled to precede speculation. Of the things of this life we know something personally; of the things of the future we really know nothing except by testimony, second-hand and disputable. Now in this way arises the distinc-

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tion of Secularism; and a very broad distinction it is. We follow the Scripture of Nature rather than the Scriptures which other people consult. If the laws or the properties of Nature clash with the laws of Christianity, then we think we are free to follow the laws or order of Nature; because, to be in harmony with Nature is surely the beginning of all true worship that may be possible to man.

You have heard Mr. Grant make reference, in the correspondence he has read to you, to the *Anxious Inquirer*, by the Rev. J. A. James. Mr. Grant said, "Secularism was good for nothing;" that it gave us no sort of direction; implying that Christianity did everything which was proper for us in this world. Now we give temporal duties the precedence, or they would never have the precedence given to them by the New Testament Christian. Few indeed would be able to do it; few would dare to attempt it. Now the Rev. J. Angell James, in his *Anxious Inquirer*, which appears to have been adopted by the Religious Tract Society, and is therefore a representative book: Mr. James has, on the sixth and seventh pages, this passage; and when I have read the passage (which relates to what we ought to do, and how we ought to conduct our lives, and what we ought to believe, and think, and feel), then you shall answer whether or not it is possible to be properly attentive to the interests of this world, and follow out the directions of the *Anxious Inquirer*, which are the doctrines Mr. Grant is here to defend.

"Eternal salvation is the great end of life. Get what you will, if you lose this you have lost the purpose of existence. Could you obtain all the wealth of the globe; could you rise to the possession of universal empire; could you, by most splendid discoveries in science, or most useful inventions in art, or most magnificent achievements of literature, fill the earth with the fame of your exploits, and send down your name with honour to the latest ages of time; still if you lost the salvation of your soul you would have lived in vain. Whatever you may gain, life will be a lost adventure if you do not gain salvation. The condition of the poorest creature that ever yet obtained eternal life through faith in Christ Jesus,—although he had a mere glimmering of intellect, just enough of understanding to comprehend the nature of repentance, although he had lived out his days amidst the most squalid poverty and repulsive scenes, although he was unknown even among the poor, and although when he died he was buried in a pauper's grave, on which no tear was ever shed,—is infinitely to be preferred to that of the most successful merchant, the greatest conqueror, the profoundest philosopher, or the sublimest poet that ever existed, if he lived and died without

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salvation. The lowest place in heaven is infinitely to be preferred to the highest place on earth. Go on, then, and urge the question, 'What shall I do to be saved?' Let no one turn your attention from this matter. As long as you covet this, your eye and heart and hope are fixed on the sublimest object in the universe; and when officious but ignorant friends would persuade you that you are too anxious, point them to the bottomless pit, and ask them if any one can be too anxious to escape its torments,—point them to heaven, and ask them if any one can be too anxious to obtain its glories,—point them to eternity, and ask them if any one can be too anxious to secure immortal life,—point them to the Saviour of life, and ask them if any one can be too anxious to secure the object for which he died."

Now I say, gentlemen, no person can read that, and believe that, and act that out, who will ever after be of any use whatever for human progress. Gentlemen, you understand, I am assuming that a person shall be impressed with the truth of that passage with as much solemnity and earnestness as Mr. James himself when writing it. If you attain to be the "profoundest philosopher," who is a great benefactor of mankind; if you come to be the "sublimest poet," who surely is one who confers refinement and pleasure upon mankind, and connects them by new and attractive relations with all truth;—if you attain all these things, honest in themselves, noble in themselves, innocent in themselves, and of the highest degree of human virtue; yet none of these, you are told, will avail you if you miss the one thing different from them all, which he calls faith in Jesus Christ. If you carry out that doctrine; if you apply it with honesty and strictness, you will find that you will be at perpetual war with what we regard commonly as the wholesome progress of our species. ["No, no."] To those who say "no," I would remind them of what the Rev. Mr. Martineau has said—"that no inquirer can fix a direct and clear-sighted gaze towards truth who is casting side glances at the same time as to the prospects of his soul;" and much less will he be able to fulfil his part in the work of the world. Mr. Greg, in that admirable work, entitled the "Creed of Christendom," appends this note by a religious friend of his, which will show you in what way those passages I have read from the *Anxious Inquirer* operate:—

"I sorrowfully admit, when I count up among my personal acquaintances, all of whom I think to be decidedly given to spiritual contemplation, and who make religion rule in their hearts, at least three out of four appear to me to have been apathetic towards all improvements of this world's systems; and a great majority

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have been virtually conservatives of evil, and hostile to political and social reform, as diverting men's energies from eternity."

It is in that sense that I regard Christianity, as so frequently explained to us, and especially by Mr. Grant's friends, as contradicting and paralyzing those efforts which I have described, and which we ought to make, under the name of Secularism. The advantages of distinguishing between the temporal and the spiritual sphere, and giving temporal duties precedence, are, I think, very great. If a man bases his conduct on what is reported to him of the future, he has no means of knowing in this life whether he is in the right or not: he must die to find it out. Now, if a man base his conduct on his ascertainable relations to the external world, he may still be perplexed by diversity, but his difficulties clear up with advancing knowledge and wider experience. Every day's experience is a light to his feet or a check upon his course. The consequence of not thus consulting nature and the relations of man to man for maxims of duty, is exemplified by the same gentleman; and I prefer taking my example from him, as Mr. Grant has chosen to introduce him in his speech. Mr. James, at the assembly of ministers at Bradford, lately moved this resolution, which I will read. Mr. Grant himself was present, and I cannot find that he ever raised his voice against it; therefore I am afraid he is one who acquiesced in it. You shall see, when you hear the resolution, how far the notions of Christianity entertained by our friends are likely to be compatible with what we call Secularism.

"That this assembly, cherishing as it does a deep conviction of the Divine authority of the Lord's-day, views with alarm the increasing temptations presented by public bodies and others, to pleasure excursions on that day; and have heard, with intense concern, the reported intention of the managers of the new Crystal Palace to open that building on part at least of the Lord's-day. This assembly is apprehensive that such a step as that now contemplated will result in much social evil, even to this class of people, by making the Sabbath-day a day of mere pleasure [Why should it not be a day of pleasure?]; and it can scarcely fail of leading to increasing neglect of public worship. On these, and other grounds, this assembly utters it protest against this contemplated evil; and calls upon the friends of Sabbath observance to the employment of all Christian means to prevent the influence of this calamity, which may be extended to the provinces."

And I sincerely hope it may be so extended. The Vicar of Aberdare has published a wise letter in the *Merthyr Tydvil Guardian*, in which he says, he hopes Crystal Palaces will be erected in every part of the country. It is a prayer, I am sure, in

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which we may all join, as the greatest advantage would result if it were realized. You see, then, the nature of Secularism, the nature of that precedence which we should give in our Sunday-schools, which are now devoted to learning hymns, repeating catechisms, and reading the Scriptures. We would convert them into places where instruction in the arts and sciences should be obtained; and we would, where necessary (not always adhering to that rule), have that day a day of the most substantial and useful kind. I point this out to show how what we call Secularism clashes with what our friends call Christianity. It would not be difficult to indicate other respects. The precept, "Keep the Sabbath-day holy," we would interpret into keeping it healthfully, usefully, instructively. Secularism would take, when necessary, the poor factory-jaded Sunday scholars into fields—that school-room of nature! It would throw open the Clyde on the Sunday to the Sunday steamer, that the poor Glasgow weaver might gaze on Ben Lomond on the Lord's-day. It would give the mechanic access to museums, and botanical gardens, and crystal palaces, and even to the theatre on that day. We would do it, because one drama of Shakspere is a nobler creation than any sermon which ever was preached; and when the heart of the toil-worn townsman leaps for joy in the woods on the Sabbath-day, it is a nobler offering to the throne of any beneficent god of nature than any prayer within the walls of the holiest Bethel that ever was built. Changing one word in a verse from Wordsworth we might say:

> "Our impule sfree, a vernal wood
> Will teach us more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the clergy can."

Secularism would authorize all rational arrangements on the Sabbath-day; to all innocent, elevating recreations, it would open the door, open it promptly, open it widely, open it for ever.

I will briefly add, in reference to the Latin and Greek particle, that though they both mean the same thing to the scholar, they do not mean the same thing to the public. When you use one, you use it with all the associations which the public connect with the word "Atheism;" and since they choose to connect with it associations which are not true, which do not properly describe us, we have a right on that account to disown the application and use of a term which is opprobrious; and every time we are called either "Infidels" or "Atheists," after we have openly and publicly requested that it should not be done, I do not know how it is to be reconciled with that charity which thinketh no evil and does

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no unkindness to any. Now to show what it really is, let any one look below the mere surface of pulpit declamation, and ask himself two questions: what has even reputed Atheism, on the whole, meant? And what has it, on the whole, sought? even as to its negative and least favourable side. It has in modern times disbelieved all accounts of the origin of nature by an act of creation, and of the government of nature by a Supreme Being distinct from nature. It has felt these accounts to be unintelligible and misleading, and has suggested that human dependence and morals in their widest sense should be founded on a basis independent of scriptural authority; and it has done this under the conviction, expressed or unexpressed, that greater simplicity, unanimity, and earnestness of moral effort would be the result. This is what it has meant, and this is what it has sought. Secularism, therefore, is not cancelling itself nor disguising itself, nor concealing itself, but progressing in the line of its own proper development. The main popular force of our speculative argument has been to convince a sufficient number of persons that morals ought to stand on ground independent of the uncertain and ever-contested dogmas of the churches; and having, as we think, shown that morals ought to stand so, we now proceed to show that they can stand so. This is simply progress, not contradiction. If we cannot show this, the gain is yours, for the public will still think you in the right; and if we can show this, the gain will still be the Christians', if they have truth upon their side in other respects; for our object being to show that they will have secular as well as religious proof, at this, the Christian, as the friend of morality, ought to be glad, for if a thing be good the more proof it has the better. We are therefore entitled in the present case to the co-operation rather than the opposition of intelligent Christians.

MR. GRANT:—Mr. Holyoake has favoured us with an instance in which he says Christianity opposes secular advantage—that instance being, a resolution of the Independent ministers at Bradford respecting the Crystal Palace and the Sabbath. I suppose Mr. Holyoake is sufficiently aware, that there are a great many different opinions upon that question among Independents, and that among those different opinions none of them is set up by any Independent as Christianity. If, therefore, he had brought forward anything in Christianity forbidding real pleasure in men, it would have been well. There are many amongst Christians who object to the opening of such places on Sundays, for they firmly believe that if you first make the Sabbath a day of pleasure then a great many will be occupied; and by and by, the sacredness that is

usually thrown around it will be taken away, and men will lose the only holiday they have, and which Christianity has been the means of giving them. Christianity has given to the working men in every country where it has gone, this great sanctuary against the over grasping of mammon and the eagerness of business. I am not sure whether there would be much more healthiness in the theatre than in the Sunday-school. For my part, I should advocate, instead of turning the present Sabbath to a different use, the giving to working men a secular Sabbath—that is, half-a-day's holiday out of the six days. But since Mr. Holyoake proceeds to advocate this first benefit of Secularism, I will endeavour to follow him as closely as possible.

The first benefit adduced as resulting to mankind in general, and the working classes in particular, as to this life, by the removal of Christianity and the substitution of Secularism in its place, is declared by Mr. Holyoake to be, giving the precedence in time and in importance to the duties of this life over those which relate to another world. This statement has been patched in places very lately. Two great patches have been put on as the result of our correspondence, which has explained to Mr. Holyoake the necessity of knowing what he means, and of meaning something feasible. He has tried hard, and this proposition is the result. The first patch was an attempt to define the definition, which led to the insertion of "precedence in time; " but the rent was made worse, and therefore at the close of our correspondence, Mr. Holyoake hastened with another stop-gap, adding, "and in importance." The first addition was ridiculous, and the second is a preposterous assumption; and both show how raw those convictions are, which before were obtruded on the world as the true "patent safety," which required a new axle-tree for the first journey. There is still some hope, since they try to mend as they go on; these instalments may indicate the possibility that they will reform it altogether, for it is too bad to be mended, and every patch makes it more clumsy. The first remark on this proposition is, that the definition of the system is adduced as its first advantage, which means, that Secularism is a good thing because it is Secularism. Thus, Mahometanism is a belief in Mahomet, and the first benefit of the belief is, that Mahometanism is a belief in Mahomet. Secularism prefers this life to another, and its benefits are, first, that it prefers this life to another. This is one of the cheapest sources of benefits ever invented. If it had happened to have existed in the time of Henry Hetherington, it would have supplied him with better materials than he possessed for a tract on "Cheap Salvation." If we are not to understand that Secularism is an advantage resulting from itself, perhaps we shall be favoured with an explanation of the difference between the benefit

here set down, and the system that is to confer it. We have here a very pleasant way of reckoning, in which Mr. Holyoake considerably overdraws his account.

The next point to be considered is, whether this definition is a benefit: how it can be turned to advantage. The feeble attempts in vague language in our correspondence to render the advantage intelligible by unmeaning generalities and platitudes as to "the certain being preferred to the uncertain," do not clear up the mystery; because the present life is uncertain; and so is a sceptic. We know where we are now, but what will happen to us the next hour is very uncertain; so that to prefer this life, is to prefer an uncertainty. Indeed, most things seem uncertain; so to prefer the certain to the uncertain, is to prefer nothing to everything, which cannot benefit the working classes very particularly. Trade is uncertain, life is the same, and so is the weather, and so are Mr. Holyoake's benefits—like some people's children who are not blessed with any, and who have this consolation—"they are certain cares, but uncertain comforts." This definition of children may stand for Secularism. Perhaps Mr. Holyoake may say, that though it is true everything in this life is uncertain, and nothing more unlikely than the realization of the Secular system, which at present is a future life, and therefore is exposed to the same objections as eternity and communism, yet still, nevertheless, things here are pretty certain; and then we shall be reduced to a pretty pass, especially if, having tried to define precedence, he would endeavour to define certainty, and tell us what he is certain of, that we are in the dark about; because it is a pity that "science, the providence of man," should be a light under a bushel.

Any way of draining the country, for instance, just now, would be a useful contribution of Secularism, especially if it positively turned up out of the negative side. Till some more light is thrown on these points we must be content with a moderate certainty.

The third difficulty arising out of this certain hope of Secularism is, to distinguish benefit No. 1 from benefit No. 2. "Science, as the providence of life and the danger of spiritual dependence," seems no different in principle from preferring this life; indeed, it is only the same thing variously worded; so that we have reached no benefit yet, but only a ring of changes on the meaning of a word. Both statements are resolvable into one; both prefer the certain present and material over the uncertain future and spiritual. We shall then be reduced to the third proposition, which is the sole benefit, and is not beneficial, and has no relation to the system defined as benefit No. 1, and repeated as benefit No. 2. The fourth difficulty of the first benefit arises from the fact, that whilst it is explained as a preference of the certain over the uncertain, it contradicts the explanation, for its sole ground-

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work is uncertainty. The idea intended to be conveyed, as elsewhere expressed, is, that man's whole duty is to be centred in this life and in humanity—that is, we are not to regard another life and divinity. It ignores, but is not honest enough to deny, God, the soul, and a future life. It assumes that we should live as though there were no such realities. Now, is this certainty? Are you so very sure that there is no God, that you have no soul, and that when you are dead you are done with? If you are not certain of this, yet set up a system which assumes this, and builds upon it, and is named after it, is not this proceeding on an uncertainty? It is certain we are living now, but it is not certain we shall not live again; and to act on the principle that ignores, disregards, and practically denies, the grandeur of man's being and destiny, is to prefer the uncertain over the certain; for it is certain there may be the things you omit out of the reckoning, and therefore the system which excludes this consideration goes in the very teeth of certainty. The value of Wellington's generalship was its safety; he prepared for contingencies; he had a resource for defeat, as well as a plan for victory; one line of fortifications on which he would fight the first battle against odds, another stronger one for a second stand, after possible temporary defeat, to try his fortune once more, and a third to save the remnant of his brave army, by having ships in readiness behind an impregnable fortress, to embark his soldiers and bring them home. The secular generalship is to risk all in the poor battle of life, repudiating the contingencies of another life, as its general intimates, and so having no ships to carry the brave army home, and no home to take them to. It was certain Wellington would fight in Spain, if the French pressed it; but the victory was uncertain, and defeat equally so. If he had given exclusive attention to the present battle, over the uncertainty of the contingent future, he would have neglected a present duty, and would really have proceeded on uncertainties against certainty, since, though he might win, he also might lose, and to omit this as uncertain, would have been overlooking what was certainly possible. Supposing that he had nothing else to consider than the battle, would therefore have been a great piece of presumption So, the fourth difficulty of this first benefit is, that it goes against its own explanation, and instead of "preferring what is certain over what is uncertain," it is founded altogether on the uncertain, and probably false supposition, that this life is all we have to care about.

The fifth difficulty in accepting the first benefit is the disingenuousness, not to say dishonesty, of it. It is not straightforward; it hides a denial of another life under the cloak of preferring the present life; it hides atheism under the cloak of

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humanity; it hides a denial of man's soul under the pretext of caring for his body. It is a poor imitation of "The Cruelty to Animals Society." It pretends to take care of man's poor body, whilst its main effect is to ignore his grand immortal soul. It imitates the animalizing doctrine of slavery and tyranny. If men are well fed, as swine may be, all finer qualities may be trampled on. Roast beef and plum pudding is the weak profession of tyranny to make the oppressed content, and stop their mouths against any cry for higher consideration; and so they cry, "The body, the body—mind the body!" "Human nature is improvable under certain well-understood (but ill-expressed) material conditions"—is the bribe and bait of men who would trample out the recognition of man's immaterial, mental, spiritual, and immortal interests. It is a dishonest diversion from the real question—like Joe Smith's promise of an earthly Canaan—to trade on the necessities of the poor, and cheat them into bartering their birthright to a glorious immortality for a mess of pottage. The men who ask us to forget God and ourselves—for man's honour and God's glory are the same cause—are those who, not long since, openly avowed atheism as their honest conviction, but who now wear the mask of Secularism, to see if that policy will cheat men into practical atheism. They will not now say there is no God, but only that it is uncertain, and is no matter; they will not say we have no soul and no eternity, but hide cunning under the profession of modesty, and say, "Secularism has not the right to pronounce a dogmatic negative on a problem so mysterious, the data for solving which are utterly beyond mortal ken, and which can only be cleared up by infinite knowledge." Yet, they do give to it a practical negative, not a dogmatical one; and they gratuitously pass by the "infinite knowledge" which has solved the question in the gospel, where life and immortality are brought to light by Jesus Christ. The same writer who now declares that the question cannot be solved by mortal ken, still parades his mortal logic, in which he says, "I took this solution into my own hands, out of the hands of the churches, and look destiny face to face;" though he has never told us anything about the appearance of destiny, nor how he managed to solve what was beyond mortal ken. Not only were the abettors of these questionable benefits atheists some little time ago, but I believe they are atheists still; they still prove there is no God in the *Reasoner*, and not long since put the devil in, demonstrating, by arguments we may yet have to notice, that the likeness was accurate, since Mr. Holyoake says it was taken "from original sources." We have proof, then, of his existence in the *Reasoner*, and more than one picture of the club-foot. Not having access to "original sources," we cannot

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say whether he suggested this last evasion, but it is marvellously like one of his transformations into an angel of light, promising a fig whilst he picks your pocket, assuring you that this life is all-important, and that he wishes only to make you comfortable here, and that if there should be an hereafter, that may be left to him; so that all we have to do is to be happy under difficulties. I like what is plain and above-board, the face of day, and fear of no man; but this calling attention to one thing mainly that people may forget another, is one of those under-hand proceedings of "morality independent of scriptural religion." Let people say right out what they mean, and stand by it till it is disproved; but this edgewise course is neither English, manly, nor straightforward. Pardon this plain speaking; but is there any man in the world who believes that the ulterior objects, the real aims of Secularism, are conveyed by the three propositions afforded me in Mr. Holyoake's correspondence? No; and if I have time, their object shall not be hidden. Meanwhile, I am showing you the course they go towards it. If these three propositions were all, they might go round the country, blow a horn, and cry out, "Hem! in the name of the prophet—figs!" When Mr. Holyoake went round under Robert Owen, he had his propositions, but the aim was to break up private families, ignore God, and share and share alike in all things. Some of their propositions were as innocent as this poor Secular definition.

Thus, take three of them. "A man is obliged to believe according to his strongest convictions;" that is, a man is obliged to believe what he believes; in other words, believing is believing. The second specimen is—"Man is obliged to like what is agreeable, and dislike what is disagreeable to him, and cannot tell which is what till he tries;" that is, you must like what you must like, and dislike what you dislike; or, in other words, you cannot be pleased with what is disagreeable. Again: "A man is obliged to follow his strongest motive;" in other words, every man is not only allowed, but obliged to please himself in what he does; therefore we are not responsible, and marriage is licentiousness, and property is injustice, and men are to live together like rabbits in a warren. It all came to nought; and now we have more propositions from the same shop. It is true, they will wash, but will not keep their colour; they are too fast in the way of progress for that. This is the newest fashion from the dealers in the stability of reason. The fifth objection to their first pattern-card is, that it is not honest; it gives the positive side to hide the negative. To be sure, it talks about another world, but they do not believe in one, for if they did, they could not so speak of it; the whole is a blind, and a carefully premeditated delusion. Their Lecturers

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go round—Robert Cooper, who originated the Secular Conference, does—and prove men have no souls, therefore no other life; whilst Holyoake's "Logic of Death" finds the greatness of man in the eternity of decomposition and recomposition of matter; and yet they speak of the duties pertaining to another world, which they deny, and endeavour to draw men from attending to. "The working classes in particular" like what is upright and downright, and therefore have only to learn these arts to repudiate the system and its abettors.

The sixth difficulty in this first benefit, arises from the fact that it is altogether founded on a mistaken division of duties. We have two sets of duties here referred to; those of this life, and those relating to another world. Now, if there are no such two sets of duties recognized in Christianity, the first benefit of Secularism is the mistake of its founders; and this is the truth. This Mr. Holyoake confesses, though he does not seem to apprehend the force of it, in the printed correspondence. Thus, addressing me, he says, "You ask if I do not know that the duties of this life pertain to another world according to Christianity. I do know it; and it is precisely on this point that Secularism is opposed to Christianity." Then if, as Mr. Holyoake is obliged to confess, the duties of this life are those which relate to another world, how can Secularism pretend to prefer the duties of this life to those which relate to another world, when the duties are the same in both cases? Had he not, therefore, been reminded of the blunder on which he proceeded in making out his benefits? Still he holds to the definition, that Secularism prefers a thing to that thing itself; it gives precedence to the duties of this life over those which pertain to another, and confesses that those preferred duties are the duties to which they are preferred, namely,—those which relate to another life. The only benefit to the working classes from such pretensions is, that they will perceive how unsafe it is to follow such leaders, who in their leading articles build on such obvious mistakes. The benefit of this system or name is, that it leaves out, or puts behind, duties relating to another world, which would be fatally false, supposing there be another world and a distinction of duties—yet the duties relating to another world are the duties of this life; so Secularism puts the duties of humanity behind the duties of humanity. The only fault it can find with the Gospel is, that it makes our social duties double duties; binding from two sets of motives instead of one; and instead of calling attention away from the claims of this world by the claims of another, that other is used to enforce the claims of this. To support the duties of time, it uses those very principles which they misrepresent as obstructing those duties. Thus we find the

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foundation of Secularism in a preposterous distinction of identical duties, acknowledged to be identical by Mr. Holyoake himself, and declared to be identical in the Bible; for it comes to rule this life, not to regulate the next—it lays down no hereafter duties. All the duties of Christianity are now on earth—deeds done in the body, or, if you will so call them, Secular duties.

The plainest way of settling such a question is by an illustration. Now, I will give a few specimens out of the New Testament, for Mr. Holyoake to distinguish to Secularists the class of duties he prefers from the class of the same duties which he professedly puts in the background. The first of these passages is Romans ii. 6—11: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God." Then, Luke xiv. 13, 14. Observe, I wish Mr. Holyoake to take these passages up; I will lend him the Bible, to show how the duties there mentioned can be distinguished in the way he has assumed, and how he can prefer one to the other. "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." 2 Cor. v. 9, 10: "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Matt. xxv. 34—40: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The first of these passages asserts God's judgment according to men's deeds—that

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is, his judgment on their conduct in this life, according as they have done well or ill; the second declares, that our kindness to the poor in this life will be remembered in the next—teaching that God permits poverty and want in some, but expects others to alleviate that, as agents of his providence. ["No, no."] If God does not permit it, nature does; and you worship her. The third affirms that we are now to seek the approbation of Christ our Saviour and Judge, by doing good here, for that he will treat us then according as we act in the body—that is, on earth, secularly. The fourth affirms, that the judgment will proceed on the ground of our conduct to Christ's brethren—that is, humanity; for he became a brother of all men when he partook of flesh and blood. It teaches plainly that we abstract not from service to man by serving Christ; but, on the contrary, we can serve him only by serving men—for he is too high to be benefited by us. What we do for others is done for Christ, though we may be mistaken in what we do. But the principle on which we are to act, is to do good to man out of love to the Saviour.

Now, the simple question for Secularism to answer, and its followers will join me in asking it, is, can Mr. Holyoake point out in these cases the difference between the duties of this life and those which pertain to another world? And if the duties are identical, how can they be preferred to themselves? I am afraid I shall not have time to enter into another point, with respect to this first benefit. I have endeavoured to go through six objections to this first benefit; and before we can allow it to be a benefit, or accept it, these objections must be removed. But the most clear, convincing, and important objection, that on which the whole stress of the argument turns, and therefore to which I especially invite Mr. Holyoake's attention, is the fact, that the duty of Christianity is the duty of this life; and that those passages of Scripture which enforce our duty to men, do not allow of any distinction to be drawn between the duties of this life and the duties of the next. Christianity comes not to say, "You shall not serve man;" but "If a man love God, let him love his brother also," and prove it by that. Now, all that Christianity does, is this: to show you that you cannot pretend to believe in, and obey the powers of a world to come, unless you act properly in this life to your fellow-men; for, "if a man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" Then we ask Mr. Holyoake, since he has come forward to prove to you that it will be a good thing to remove Christianity, in order to prefer the duties of this life to those of another,—if he comes to say this, he must prove that Christianity does not enforce the duties of this life, and recognize no other duties but those that are in this world—deeds

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done in the body, deeds done to man, but from an extra motive which they have not, namely,—love to God and love to Jesus Christ. On the judgment day it will not be asked, How much did you abstract from man to serve me? how much did you give up serving man to honour me? but, How often did you visit me in prison? "Thee, Lord? I never saw thee! never visited thee!" "No, not me; but I come again into the world, in the shape of all suffering humanity; and every instalment given to a poor man is given to me, and I will pay you for it now." "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." Use your secular means, for you shall have spiritual blessings, and be welcomed into everlasting habitations.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—We had a short piece of praise of plain speaking. I have often heard the same thing said before, by persons who have not borne in mind that plain speaking ought to be fair speaking and just speaking. Things may be very plain, and have no virtue whatever in them unless they also have truth and propriety. Mr. Grant sat down by telling us that if we were kind to the poor, and performed other acts of social charity, that is all that would be required of us at the last day. [Interruption.] Have the goodness to listen. I am not going to misinterpret Mr. Grant, because if he did not say that, it would be what I would not desire to make him to say. His argument, I take it to be, is—that we are wrong in our setting up the discharge of social duty as being first in importance and as being sufficient. Now he said it would not be asked of us, at the last day, what we had abstracted from human duties to serve God, but in fact that we should be approved if we did our duty to our fellow-men, and that that would be taken as a compensation for——[Interruption.] The only effect of that passage upon my mind was, that it was sufficient to do well socially in order to be accepted hereafter. ["No, no."] The more "No, noes" you utter the better; because, if that is not the case, then I am right in saying that Secularism and Christianity are not identical, as I understood Mr. Grant to be arguing. I understood him to be saying, that at the last day it would be rendered to every man according to his deeds. What is the value of that, if the meaning of it also is, that it will be also according to his faith? I do not know how I can trust the declaration. Are deeds all that Mr. Grant means? No, no; he meant something else beside that. On the title-page of the *Anxious Inquirer*, the Rev. Mr. James places this inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" and the answer is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." I remember once, in a controversy at Worcester,

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about twelve years ago, venturing to quote from that parable about the judgment, where men are said to be rewarded for visiting the sick and feeding the hungry; and I was told by my opponent that I was garbling the Scriptures and putting forward passages which showed the utility of good works, and keeping behind the necessity of sound faith also. Now if it is true, as Mr. Grant says, that Secularism and Christianity are identical, what is the meaning of his opposition to me to-night? If we are both meaning the same thing we ought to have a coalition "mission," as we have just now a coalition government. I do not know why the *Banner*, why Dr. Campbell, why Mr. James, should propose Mr. Grant as a missionary to us, if what we preach, Secularism, is simply identical with the duties of Christianity. If they are identical, I say I am glad to hear it. I have no wish to quarrel with any passage of Scripture which is in accordance with my own views. But when we come to a subsequent night's discussion—namely, the "Eclecticism of the Apostolic writings"—I shall be able to show, that while Mr. Grant has quoted some passages which certainly, so far as they go, favour his position, yet we may bring forward others of so different a nature, that you will find yourselves bewildered as to which side you should trust, and which declaration you ought to take. If it were not for that incongruity and that difficulty I should not be standing here. If it were a mere matter of wilfulness on our part, —if we went about determining that we would destroy the immaterial part of man and make him sensual,—as is charged upon us,—if, I say, it was a matter of mere wilfulness, there would be some truth in these objections. It is, however, with us a matter of conviction. We see differently from Mr. Grant, and therefore we speak differently. We have no such intention as that imputed to us, by the principles of Secularism, or by any doctrines of Socialism to which Mr. Grant has referred, but which I think he never could have understood, or he never would have spoken of them in such a way. He says, alluding to certain things which take place in our observations of nature, that because there are some things we cannot understand in his theory, we ought to be content, because in nature there are similar difficulties, and we worship nature. Mr. Grant overlooks this, that we no more reverence the inequalities of nature than the inequalities of theology. He ought to know, that the aim of all civilization is to make a conquest of nature, to control nature. The aim of all science, the aim of all instruction, the sum of all progress, the pride of all civilization, is that day by day we subdue nature and make her obedient to our will. We do not put up with difficulties in nature, any more than we do with difficulties in

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theology. The business of intelligence and inquiry is to diminish them as much as possible in every human direction. He said he thought the Sunday-school would at least be as healthy as the theatre. Well, perhaps it may be so; but my argument was, not that it would be as healthy, but that the theatre would be more *instructive*. He spoke of the opinions of various Independent Ministers upon the question of the opening of the Crystal Palace, and said their opinions were different. That is quite true; but the resolution I read to you was a resolution which they passed, so that at least a great majority of them were decidedly of opinion with the resolution. Now if the resolution had merely said, that in the opinion of these persons the opening of the Crystal Palace would do away with one day which belonged to us of right,—if their argument was based on a simple secular ground, then I should have disputed on that ground the soundness of their conclusion, but should have made it no reproach that they took that ground. But as I understand them, they find fault, not on that ground, but because of the "divine" authority of the Lord's day—because it would lead to a neglect of public worship. What would you think of persons in any department of manufacture, if they should try to get a prohibition from government to close the establishments of rival dealers in the same profession? Now it seems to me strange that Ministers of the Gospel should condescend to ask that when their places of worship are opened people shall be obliged to go there, and that all other places shall be closed at the same time. It has been said that Christianity is not opposed to any one of the proper and innocent pleasures of the people. I say that if the founders of the Crystal Palace shall be of opinion that in opening it on the Sunday, or if the manager of a theatre should think he was serving the people by opening his theatre on Sunday, he or they ought to be free to do so. It is on this ground that, if half as much attention were paid to investigations of the methods of nature, and to the directions which they sanction for human government, as has been bestowed upon kindred spiritual subjects, we think the world would now be ten times wiser, and the people a hundred times happier, than we find them.

Christianity teaches the duties of this life; but what duties are they? I think it will be found that they are the overriding duties of preparing for another world, as is shown by the passage I read from the *Anxious Inquirer*. You see under what circumstances they would pursue the discharge of their duties in this life. You say that Christianity teaches the duties of this life: yes, and something more; but if that something more would only bewilder me, surely I am free to disregard it. I

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maintain that, so far as we go, if our notions of Secularism are identical with notions of Christianity,—if that be the case, then so far we are right, so far we are innocent. We may not go so far as Mr. Grant; we may not have the power to see so far; we may not be able to adopt all his views; but if, so far as we go, our views are identical with those of Christianity, what occasion is there for opposing us? Surely our only crime is that we do not go further. If, as far as we go, we are innocent and virtuous, surely our intentions ought to be counted as good, and we ought not to be decried as making war upon society, or endeavouring to degrade man from those higher and more intellectual occupations which properly constitute his duty. We do not say that every man ought to give an *exclusive* attention to this world, because that would be to commit the old sin of dogmatism and exclude the possibility of another world, and of walking by a different light from that by which alone we are able to walk. But as our *knowledge* is confined to this life; and testimony, and conjecture, and probability are all that can be set forth with respect to another life, we think we are justified in giving *precedence* to the duties of this state, and of attaching *primary* importance to the morality of man to man. We pursue this course; and I believe that Mr. Grant overlooks that to do so is not only useful in itself, but innocent; and we cannot fail to stand well in the eyes of that Judge, who, according to his own account, will reward every one of us according to our deeds. If our deeds are as true as we can render them, if our actions are as virtuous as we can make them, if our efforts are for the improvement and welfare of our fellow-creatures, surely, so far, we are going in the same direction, and we ought to have the applause of Christians, not their opposition. We are forced, however, into antagonism with them whether we would or not. I have said that there are many parts of Scripture which, for myself, I not only heartily accept, but very cordially and devoutly admire. But because I accept and recognize those portions, I object to that doctrine which would force upon me, under the penalty of calling me morally criminal, the acceptance of others. What we mean by Secularism is, that we endeavour thus to free ourselves,—to free the Secular sphere, and to assert its usefulness and its innocence, —to authorize all men to walk in it without alarm of any kind, like that created by the doctrines of the *Anxious Inquirer* and many parts of the New Testament. As I said a few nights ago, —and I will end with these words,—"Each person holding such views will be characterized by the interest he takes in good works. Science, art, and morals will have his support and countenance. We should not pray for the people, after the Church

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and Dissenting manner—we should seek to help them. We should not send dogma-missionaries to the heathen—we should send arts, sciences, and instructors. We should send Chambers' 'Information for the People,' instead of the impracticable verbiage of the Religious Tract Society. Combe's 'Constitution of Man' would be worth a hundred New Testaments on the banks of the Ganges. At home we would open a Crystal Palace in every town on a Sunday. We would open museums, parks, pleasure grounds, rivers, railways, and theatres on the Sunday. We would improve the health and habits of the people, let bibliolatry say what it might. We hold one drama by William Shakspere to be worth all the Homilies of the bench of bishops, and those of the Wesleyan Conference and the Congregational Union of Dissenters thrown into the bargain. In every town our friends, who would approve themselves friends of Secularism, will look to the actual condition of the people—will promote instruction, sanitary, political, and social improvements. Leave religious dreamers to wait on supernatural aid—let us look to what man can do for man. Coleridge put more truth into poesy in one verse of his 'Ancient Mariner,' than can be gathered in six weeks of Sundays from the pulpits of polemical and objurgating divines:—

'Farewell, farewell, but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding guest—
He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.'

MR. GRANT: Ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to find that my friend, Mr. Holyoake, has formed so very high and courteous an estimate of the bench of bishops and of the dissenting clergy put together. If he had completed his extract—and he was reading from what I have in my hand—you would have seen how this courtesy agrees with what he has been saying.—"Let pulpits rave, if such unhappily is still their wont, bigots scold in their erring zeal, but let no man fear to serve humanity." As if pulpits were set up to oppose serving humanity. I apprehend that Mr. Holyoake will be somewhat conscious that he completely failed in showing any distinction between the duties of this life and those which relate to another world. He told you that he will quote some other passages—and then what? Will he prove that these are not here? It would have been well if he had quoted these, and shown the distinction he could make between the duties of this life and those of another world. If none, then his system is altogether based on the mistake of distinguishing

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things that do not differ. Mr. Holyoake, however, observes, that if the duties of this life are the same as those we hold in Christianity, they are safe and right. Now, no doubt if they perform the duties of this life, they are safe and right; but the question is, what are the duties of this life? and whether they perform those duties, on our idea of them, in neglecting God in this life—in not serving him in this life. And then, again, the question is not so much merely the outward deeds, but also the principles on which they act, and from which they proceed. And hence, though faith in Christianity is required, yet also faith is to prove itself by its works. Therefore it is the inward principle that is looked at chiefly, and not the outward action. I might give a man money, in order to bribe him to do something wrong; therefore it would not be a kindness. The question is, whether Christianity does not supply more motives for the performance of the duties which we owe to man, than Secularism: for all that Secularism does, is to take away one of the motives, namely, the remembrance that God watches over us, and that he will judge us. But my friend observes, further,—If these duties that we advocate in Christianity, and those that he advocates, are the same, why do we oppose them? Now, we do not oppose them—they oppose us. Who was here first? Why should Mr. Holyoake come and say Christianity must be removed before any good can be done to the world, or at any rate, before their system can be established? Which was here first, do you think? Which was printed first, the Gospel or "*The Reasoner?*" Will you say that the Gospel started 1800 years ago, and has just overtaken "*The Reasoner*," to find fault with it and oppose it? I will give Mr. Holyoake a passage of his own. Writing to William Howitt, Mr. Holyoake observed;—"Provided good is commenced, it is enough, and may seem trifling to dispute priority in the matter; but if it be not worth while to insist on precedence in this question, on the part of those to whom it really belongs, it is not worth while to do it on the part of those to whom it does not belong: as it deprives the abused and derided originators of social reforms, of the only consolation that a suspicious and jealous world might otherwise leave them—the consciousness of having been the first to step in a right path."—*Reasoner*, vol. i. p. 50. Yet he comes to rob us of "the consciousness of having been first to step in the right direction," and then says, "If you are going our way, why do you oppose us?" There is, however, another difficulty, and Mr. Holyoake has not answered any of those I have brought forward. There is a seventh difficulty, which he may answer when he quotes other passages of Scripture. The seventh difficulty about the first benefit is, that on the supposition of there being another

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world, and of the duties relating to it being different to those relating to this world, as the proposition falsely assumes, the direction given in this benefit is both sinful and absurd, and manifestly untrue. Who that believes in another world can give the preference in importance to this world! Mr. Holyoake will perhaps explain on what principle a man's eternal existence is of less importance than the average human life. The end of a thing is more important than the beginning—what we tend to, is of more consequence than what we are. A man away from home regards home as of more consequence than his temporary lodgings, and on returning home, the first thing in time and action is to get into the train; the first thing in feeling and desire which leads to this action is love of home. So we are to seek first the kingdom of God as our final home, desire this above all things, and first in action travel along the line of our earthly duty, as the road to it. But Secularism says, "Let your temporary convenience stand before your permanent welfare." Such conduct in life would be both folly and immorality. Are we to prefer the present over the future, because it is present? And is not this heaping up sorrow and trouble for the time when the future will become a present? Men in general do not think that to-day is better than to-morrow. All men in business work to-day for to-morrow; and so they prefer the future to the present. See the student at College or University, how he plies for the future, and when he starts in a profession, or the trader in business, how willingly they endure labour and privation now, in the hope of securing comfort afterwards! "Yes," you will say, "this is good as far as to the grave; here on earth the future of our life may act as a motive to present duty, and to-morrow may rule to-day; this is a good Secular principle for this life, but whilst the future of our earthly life may be brought in to influence our present conduct, it is irrational to go further, to carry it out, to be consistent, and let our future life urge us to our present duty in hope and ambition." How so? Please to explain it. As the matter now stands, the principle which makes present endurance light, and present duty binding, when we consider our future in this life, is reasonable, because afflictions and evils may come on us for neglect, and benefits in the future of this life may reward attention; so that here, in fact, the present is nothing compared to the future. But the wisdom Secularism proposes, is to reverse this rule, so far as any further future may be concerned. It is a good rule to prefer the future—only a bad rule to prefer a future life! It is wise up to the funeral oration, to secure that part—let the rest be subordinate. This, gentlemen, is the demoralization of reason and conscience; it is trifling with the common sense of mankind. Give the highest

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regard to this life, because you cannot live long in it; but subordinate the future, because you will never get out of it! It does still appear to me wiser to say, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where no thieves can break through and steal." It does seem to me wise to say, "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" If you get the whole world you cannot keep the whole world, because you must go out of the world. Shall we be told—"True, if there is an eternity it must be important; we Secular leaders have no objection to another life, but we do not believe there is one." If you do not, then why state it as a benefit of your system that it prefers this life to another? If you do believe in one, the preference is as manifest folly as if a spendthrift should gamble away his estate to appear brave for a night, and awake up in the morning a beggar for life. But you either do believe in another life, or you do not; or else, having no idea on the subject, you should say nothing about it; and therefore your proposition is either hypocrisy or folly. We may conclude this examination of benefit number one, by quoting an account of one of Mr. Holyoake's lectures from "*The Reasoner*," vol. iv. p. 70. I mean Mr. Holyoake's Lecture on "The Analysis of Puffing," which was "an investigation into the principles whereby the professional speculator lays the vice, vanity, and ignorance of the populace under contributions. Mr. Holyoake explained how a knowledge of the world, the presence of sagacity, and the want of moral principle enabled any adventurer systematically to victimize society in its present half-trained, half-wise state. The preposterous pretensions now tolerated in so many advertisements, the lecturer contended, were an imputation on the spirit of commerce, and appealed to trade to rise to the dignity of truth, and banish that hyperbolism of representation which was justly scorned in private transactions."—If we extend this from tradesmen to teachers,—constitution makers, professional promisers, agitators for *repale*, the six points and no surrender, socialism and no mistake, "without mixture of error"—if we include the *Reasoner*, whose first page proposes for "no popery" the cry of "no poor," which the editor calls a "more useful cry," but which, like shearing swine, has hitherto been all cry and little wool—if we were to add the subsequent professions, systems, names, and constitutions, revolutions and reactions, by which the *Reasoner* imitates France, even to the present despotism—if we were to come down from the first to the rational, to the last, (or, rather, the latest at present) Secular development, and apply this lecture of Mr. Holyoake on "The Analysis of Puffing" to all these, there would be nothing left to be desired on the subject. Thus, I have gone through seven

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objections to the first benefit; and since I have gone through them one by one, and stated very clearly, as I hope, what those objections are, I hope Mr. Holyoake will give some further attention to them, as he will have time between now and the next debate.

The discussion was then adjourned.

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THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 27, 1853.

MR. MORLEY:—I rise for the purpose of merely making an announcement, which may be of importance to some persons in this room. It is to convey to you the information contained in this note—which is anonymous, but, I doubt not, true—that a gentleman who was here on this evening week had his pocket picked of his watch, and we understand a second has announced himself as in the same predicament. Now, my only object is to put you on your guard; because, in receiving a small payment at the door, of course there is no guarantee for the honesty of those who are in this room. I am glad to state that there are policemen in undress in the room; but still, in spite of that precaution, you may be exposed to danger; and therefore any of you that have valuable property about you I would advise to look about you. The gentlemen who makes this announcement suggests that it should be repeated in the course of half an hour, for the benefit of others who may come in; but I take it that the room is so full already, that it will be hardly necessary.

MR. RICHARD MOORE:—Ladies and gentlemen,—Mr. Syme, the gentleman who occupied the chair on behalf of Mr. Holyoake on the last evening of discussion, is necessarily called away to the country by a previous engagement. I shall, with your permission, have the honour of appearing in this chair on behalf of Mr. Holyoake this evening.

Mr. HOLYOAKE:—Messrs. Chairmen, ladies, and gentlemen,—We have entered upon a discussion, which I understood and hoped was to be one of argument, but, judging from Mr. Grant's speeches last week, is to be one of epithets. He was pleased to compare us to "Arab thieves," and called us a "turbulent banditti." Has he forgotten the condition of his forefathers? Dr. John Robinson records of them, that "Independency at first in England worked its way in a clandestine manner, and its mem-

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bers concealed their principles from public view, to avoid the penal laws enacted against Nonconformists." Therefore, let Mr. Grant, as a Dissenter, remember that, in the opinion of the British people and Parliament, there have been theological Arabs in our land before to-day. It was said we were "dishonest;" that we "hide our opinions under a cloak;" that we wear "masks;" that we are "cheats;" that we "hide our cunning;" that our proceedings are "under-hand;" and, for myself, I was compared to a "devil and a pickpocket," and described as the advocate of a "carefully premeditated delusion," and of the destruction of family, property, and marriage. The *British Banner* has said yesterday, that last week my friends "were not restrained by feelings of excessive delicacy, or a keen sense of moral propriety." What do you think of this language, on the score of "excessive delicacy and a keen sense of moral propriety?" Why, gentlemen, it is the custom of the clergy to point at Thomas Paine as an instance of coarseness of invective; but you cannot find in all his writings anything worse than this, and he wrote half a century ago, under the antagonism of encountering more virulent enemies in one week than Mr. Grant has seen during his whole life. And what, after all, is our offence, but this only—that we do not see with Mr. Grant's eyes? we believe differently from him, and forthwith he considers himself entitled to stigmatize us as thieves, liars, and dissemblers. One Mr. Peter Sibree, of Birmingham, writing to the *British Banner* of Dec. 27, describes Mr. Grant as "bathing his" controversial "sword in *love*." It may be so; but certainly the "sword of love" never dripped with such epithets before. If, however, this bearing be not changed, we never need trouble to meet Mr. Grant again, for we can meet with controversy as refined as this at the corner of any street. Why is the language I have recited applied to us? Are we not as reputable as Mr. Grant? Are not the lives of our friends as blameless, on the whole, as the lives of his friends? Are we not as sincere as himself? Such language as he has employed would not be permitted in the House of Commons—then why upon a Christian platform? These displays are now banished even from the political hustings. In the obscurest meeting of the working classes a better tone prevails. Can it be true, then, that the respectable name of Samuel Morley sanctions the epithets applied to us? Does the Rev. Howard Hinton approve them? Does the Rev. Dr. Campbell, or the Rev. Thomas Binney, approve them? Do those eminent preachers, moving in circles presumed to give tone to society, intend it to be understood that the mission they are promoting among us is to be of this character? I make no complaint if it may make the inquiry; and this is all that I will say upon

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the subject; for those who say that Mr. Grant's language is right in these respects, can never more say that the language upon our side has ever been wrong. I therefore ask the audience to examine afterwards many of my opponent's statements, for I shall not pause to notice more than half the allegations he made and last week promised to make, because to do so would divert this controversy, which ought to be instructive and serious in matters of principle, into a tedious and trivial debate on personalities. Besides, if I consented to notice these things, it would establish a precedent, which would oblige me in future discussions to recognize the worst of puns and to answer the lowest of imputations.

The chief objection to which Mr. Grant drew my attention was this: If I prefer the duties of this life to those which pertain to another world, it implies, says he, a knowledge of another world, else how can I prefer that which I know nothing of? It is true, as far as it goes, but Mr. Grant keeps back what, if he is as well acquainted with our writings as he has told us he is, he must know to be the sense in which we always use these expressions. What we say, drawn out in full for those unacquainted with us, is this: Secularism gives the precedence to the duties of this life over those *said to* pertain to another world. We make no pretension to a knowledge of another world; and when we speak of the future we always allude to the conjectured future. Why we have not been more formal in our statements has been this, that hitherto we have had only two things to do—to call loud enough to be heard, and to call with sufficient earnestness to assure any who listened that we really desired to be heard. If we spoke somewhat carefully to our friends, that was enough: it did not matter whether we always spoke intelligibly to our opponents, while our opponents were bent upon refusing us a hearing; but now they choose to ask what we have to say, and seem disposed to hearken to our reply, we will make it as respectfully as we can, and as carefully as we are able.

Mr. Grant, in order to prove that Christianity is a secular system, told us that every man would be rewarded according to his deeds. Now, this is not the whole of the truth; and Mr. Grant will admit my right to say so; for in the correspondence which preceded this discussion he told me that he accepts the Eleventh Article of the Church of England, which article says, that "we are accounted righteous before God only by faith, *and not for our own works* or deservings." In the New Testament there are two sets of texts, one in favour of works; another in favour of faith; and Mr. Grant gave us the secular texts, and omitted to quote the others; for according to our twofold Scriptures faith and works are necessary for salvation,

and the balance is given in favour of faith, for Paul says, "For to him that *worketh not*, but believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness." Thus Christian secularism is at best but a mixture of faith and works, in which the works are hurtfully subordinate, and the premium is given to faith.

We were called upon to show what secular duties are they which the Scriptures contradict. Now take a few instances—I might give a score. Solomon says, "Spare not the rod;" Secularism says, "Put the rod up." At a meeting of the York Auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society it was related by Mr. T. J. Bourne, lately, that one day when the present young Prince of Wales would not learn his lesson, and defied his teacher, Miss Hillyard, Prince Albert was sent for, who took the Bible in his hand, and read to the young prince the declaration of Solomon, that "he who loveth his son chasteneth him betimes," and then chastised the young prince, and put him in a corner. Now, what is the result of this barbarous scriptural tuition? The result is, that when the royal father beats the young prince, the young prince, when he ascends the throne, betters the instruction, and beats the people; and no doubt that the walls of this very school-room have often resounded with the cries of poor children, who have had to thank the Scriptures for a flogging. In secular schools, and in secular families, the rod is held to be disreputable. Christianity says, "In whatsoever state Providence hath placed you, be you therewith content;" Secularism says, "In whatsoever state you find yourself, endeavour *to improve* it." Christianity says, "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made unto God; "Secularism says, "Be careful for all things needful, and by exertion and intelligence seek to supply all virtuous human wants." Christianity says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;" Secularism says, "Seek first the welfare and happiness of humanity, and the kingdom of a beneficent God and his righteousness ought to be included therein." Thus Christian secularism and Rationalist secularism are not identical all through. With many texts of Scripture our views coincide, but where the Scriptures contradict our notions of duty, we claim to walk unreproached by the light of our own convictions. We ask Mr. Grant, where is the sin in all this? Herein is our rst great benefit. We obtain freedom of thought and action, a ear purpose, a clear conscience, a useful life, and satisfaction in eath. Mr. Grant's great want of knowledge of the subject he as discussing was shown in one of his sayings last evening, at we preferred temporal convenience to our permanent welare; whereas, we hold that the pure discharge of temporal

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duty is the noblest way of deserving not only permanent, but eternal welfare, that can be devised. We were told that the Christian has double motives for the performance of secular duties. Is there no mistake here? The additional motive alluded to is the expectation of reward or the fear of punishment. This motive is both remote and vicious. We have stronger and purer motives of duty, in the perception of the inherent pleasure and dignity of well-doing, and the pain and discredit of evil, which are more powerful with us than with the Christian, because we find them sufficient, and he finds them insufficient. Besides, what a wilderness is the Evangelical doctrine of motives! First you are told to attend to your moral duties; then you are told that you cannot do anything unless God first disposes you; then you are told that whatever good works you perform will be of no avail unless you also believe; and then that you cannot believe unless God gives you grace to believe; and then that God will not give you this grace unless you ask him; and then that you cannot ask him effectually unless you already have the grace of faith, which is the very thing you have to ask for. What effect can all this have, but to bewilder the young searcher after truth and duty? Contrast this perplexing doctrine with the simple and straightforward instruction of Secularism: "Mean well, and act well, and you will deserve well, both here and hereafter, whatever you may see reason to believe."

I now turn to the proposition of the night: "Science the providence of man, and that absolute spiritual dependency may involve material destruction." By science are understood those systems of rules and reasons for them which direct the operations of men in industry, knowledge, and government. Science, in its broadest sense, includes art, which is its practical application. Science is the handmaid of nature. The author of "The Creed of Christendom," who would be far from agreeing with me in other respects, observes, that "the lot of man, not perhaps altogether of the individual, but certainly of the race, is in his own hands, from his being surrounded by fixed laws, on the knowledge of which and on conformity to which his well-being depends. He must be taught first the Physical laws on which health depends; next, the Moral laws on which happiness depends; third, the Intellectual laws on which knowledge depends; fourth, the Social and Political laws on which material prosperity and advancement depend; fifth, the Economic laws on which wealth depends. A true comprehension of all these, and of their unexceptionable and unalterable nature, would ultimately rescue mankind from all their vice, and nearly all their sufferings, save their

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casualties and sorrows." Now, this comprehensive passage suggests how wide is the sphere which science occupies, and how beneficent would be its fully developed influence on mankind, and how far Secularism, which includes it, is from being that narrow, gross, and sensual thing which Mr. Grant painted it. Science represents the available source of help to man, ever augmenting in proportion to his observation, study, courage, and industry. We do not confound science with nature. Nature is the storehouse of riches, but when its spontaneous treasures are exhausted science enables us to renew them and to augment them. It is the well-devised method of using nature. It is in this that Science is the Providence of Man. It is not pretended that Science is a perfect dependence; on the contrary, it is admitted to be narrow and but partially developed; but though it should be represented as a limited dependence, we must not overlook the fact that it is the only special dependence that man has: however infantine now, it is an ever-growing power.

The Christian of this day will tell us that he, too, appreciates science, and uses it extensively; but between his estimate and ours there is a very marked difference. He uses it, but we place more dependence and a higher value upon it: he regards it as inoperative without the Divine blessing; we, on the contrary, consider its agency independent of every form of theological faith. If the natural philosopher judiciously compounds his chemicals he obtains a true result, whether he believes that the elements he experiments upon are self-existent or created. The arithmetician, whose division and dividend are both correct, is in a fair way of obtaining an exact quotient, although the calculator disbelieves all the Thirty-nine Articles. If a Mechanics' Institution is built after the working rules of Cubitt or Peto, it will stand as firmly as a church built by Pugin. The Crystal Palace, erected after the manner of Fox and Henderson, will not fall, though it be opened on a Sunday. We hold that the principles of science are independent of every creed. The laws of nature are not suspended by Collects or Conventicles; the same sun shines equally on the Christian and the Secularist.

The late Sidney Smith, the same who was Canon of St. Paul's—a man whose frankness was only equalled by his genial piety—put on record this remarkable passage: "The doctrine of the immediate and perpetual interference of Divine providence *is not true*. If two men travel the same road, the one to rob, the other to relieve a fellow-creature who is starving, will any but the most fanatic contend that they do not *both* run the *same chance* of [illegible] over a stone and breaking their legs? And is it not [illegible] of fact, that the robber often returns safe, and the just

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man sustains the injury? The man who places religion upon a false basis is the greatest enemy to religion. If victory is always to the just and good, how is the fortune of impious conquerors to be accounted for? Why do they erect dynasties and found families which last for centuries? The reflecting mind whom you have instructed in this manner, and for present effect only, naturally comes upon you hereafter with difficulties of this sort, and he finds that he has been *deceived*." If, however, the impious tyrant succeeds, and bad men prosper, as we notice to be the case every day, we cannot ascribe this to Providence without discouraging all virtue, which is built upon trust in Providence. If, then, the despot and the knave accomplish their end by a vigorous use of material appliances, it is clear that natural resources are independent of any form of religious faith, and the patriot and the honest man may hope to succeed by equal or greater vigour, whatever may be his speculative opinions. If it is contended that Providence does not interfere in human affairs in any way superseding human exertion, but nevertheless he does interfere, I ask, in what way does he interfere? at what instigation, and under what circumstances, does the operation commence? In one of those few metropolitan pulpits where sacredness of pretension does not protect any statement from searching inquiry, I once heard a preacher examine the statement made, I believe, by Judge Parke, that the act of the man who about that time attempted to shoot Her Majesty had been diverted by Providence. The preacher said: Had the statement been made in the pulpit it might have passed; but being made in a law court, where the speaker was supposed to confine himself to facts and to evidence, it was calculated to arouse curiosity; and he (the preacher) had carefully looked into the evidence given on the trial, but had not found any witness who deposed to the interference of Providence. Did Providence bend the pistol barrel? Did Providence rust the lock, or damp the powder, or play false with the percussion cap? Did he palsy the arm of the would-be regicide, or cause a tremor of body, or a misgiving of mind, or a dimness of sight, that prevented the needful steadiness of aim? Did he cause the ground under the foot of the criminal to give way? Were the horses at that moment startled, and the royal party jerked out of the line of danger? Was the coachman forewarned of the approaching catastrophe? Did a presentiment seize the guards, so that timely precautions were adopted? What gunmaker, chemist, geologist, physician or metaphysician, veterinary surgeon, or observer, detected any such interposition, and deposed to the fact? If none, the judge departed from legal custom in making his declaration, and we must look to human contingencies alone to account for the fortunate result.

MR. GRANT:—Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Holyoake has made the mistake this evening which he so frequently makes in his *Reasoner*, instead of answering arguments fastening upon epithets, of taking them out of their connection, not explaining what their real application was, nor proving whether in any of the cases in which I used them, they were strictly and properly applied. At the same time that he is unwilling to reciprocate any of those epithets, he has employed the *Reasoner* just as this discussion was commencing, to state certain things respecting me, which were in no respect worthy of him, nor of his professions on this platform. It is a mistake, however, of Mr. Holyoake's to say that I called him a pickpocket and a devil. This is a misapplication altogether of the expressions which I used, and the connection in which they were employed. I did not say that Mr. Holyoake was here to oppose family and property, but, that Socialism did so in its principles. I did not, however, expect to please Mr. Holyoake in this discussion. If I had done so, I should have felt as one did who wrote to the *Reasoner* to say, "When I saw that you praised me, I really thought that I had made some great mistake; but I find that you made up for it in the next number." Mr. Holyoake, however, finishes off his abusive epithets by stating that he can find at the corners of the streets one equal to myself. Perhaps that is his method of respectfulness. ("No, no.") If that was not said then I misapprehended it. In reference to the passages of Scripture, Mr. Holyoake said there were two classes, the one secular and the other spiritual, but omitted to notice that the secular passages are founded upon the spiritual—that the doctrines are themselves the basis of the practices. I did expect certainly, that he would have mentioned some good things that were forbidden by Christianity; instead of that, he quotes from Solomon, who was before Christianity, something about the rod and the child. Now no one can deny for a moment that there may occasionally be a necessity for chastisement. But I have not come here to defend the correction of children; that is not our argument. Mr. Holyoake, however, who opposes this, at the same time forgets that nature chastises those who break her laws. He himself stated in the very same speech that he found quite sufficient reasons for duties in this life—because it is discreditable not to do his duty, and *painful* also. At the same time he stated, as if to stultify his own argument, that men may, in this life, rise to the very height of power and greatness by the violation of all moral and social laws. However, I do not think it is worth while to enter into these questions, therefore I shall call your attention to the real question at issue. Before replying to what has just been ad-

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vanced, as to the ground which Mr. Holyoake has taken this evening, I shall briefly refer to the argument on the first benefit, to remind you that Secularists proceed upon a misapprehension of the point at issue between them and Christianity. We, who consider the "old ways" to be as secure now, as when originally constructed, affording the only safe passage amid the perils and perplexities of life, are asked to abandon them, and when we maintain their continued adaptation to man's requirements, we are charged with upholding a system which, in "the Cabinet of Reason," is called, "the mother of hypocrisy and malignity"—for these are the soft words in which Christianity is described, not in discussions, before a general audience, but in the "advised and revised" statements of authoritative Secularists. Is it unreasonable to demand of those who mistake such rebukes and condensed misrepresentations for wholesome counsel, what peculiar benefits would result from following their advice? Mr. Holyoake was bound to give a clear, unequivocal statement of the advantages which the substitution of Secularism would secure. He should have demonstrated not only that what he calls benefits are really such, and that they are the logical results of principles he has discovered, but that they are also peculiar to his system, and both omitted from, and retarded by, the religion he would supplant. In this he unmistakably failed. His failure was more fundamental than the weakness of his first proposition—he omitted entirely the basis of that proposition: it is professedly "the positive side" which has turned up out of some former negations, which are now abandoned: let free inquirers then be frank enough to give the negative side, or how can we understand that their positive assumptions are in any way related to their sceptical negations? He advocates the results of something which he hides, so begins in the dark, and naturally misses his way. * Let this question be noted—what are the negative views of which the present doctrines are the positive side, and how and when did that side turn up? Was it when the other side was overturned? Do they now advocate the conclusion as a compensation for abandoning the premises? These are preliminary questions laid down in my letters as the scheme of a fair and full inquiry, which Mr. Holyoake in his opening speech professed to adopt, but which he has not followed; whilst he maintained silence as to the course he should pursue during the time that I ought to have been preparing definitely for each point, on this occasion. It will be for the reader afterwards carefully to examine the series of objections to the first benefit, which has the additional defect of resulting from some invisible negations. I need only glance cursorily at some of the leading points: it

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was made plain that exclusive attention to the affairs of this life did not secure the imaginary advantage of freedom from uncertainty; nor will this occur till this life is built on mathematics and the next life disproved by better arguments than are adduced by the originator of the Secular Conference, and the existence of God invalidated, by better reasoning than Holyoake's Reply to Paley, and Chilton's Contributions to the *Reasoner*, all which are now omitted, that the assumption which failed in argument may be adopted in practice, as they quietly ignore what they could not disprove, and divert men from those questions by calling attention to others, as the positive side of what they no longer openly stand by. It was distinctly proved that a practical belief in the life to come, leads to no indifference to whatever, in a proper sense, belongs to the life that now is. Let them point out a single unquestioned duty to the performance of which Christianity presents the slightest obstruction; let them plainly set forth any course of conduct morally right, socially beneficial, politically just, from which the Christian is debarred, furnish instances of an undue disparagement of secular things, of a really culpable disregard to what we owe to ourselves and others, so far as this life merely is concerned, for which Christianity, properly understood, is in any way responsible: if they have none such instances, the attack on Christianity fails; if they have any such, the case of Secularism is not therefore made out, for Mr. Holyoake must not forget that to prove the imperfection of Christianity is not to prove the perfection of Secularism; and he can do neither. I read some extracts from the New Testament, a book which he did not quote in his first night's speeches, though his object was to overturn it, and which, though he has largely quoted to-night, he has always misapplied; but he is to favour us with a full detail of the immoral doctrines contained in that book, and though he is keenly sensitive to whatever is immoral and impure in the Gospel, he candidly admitted that he had no objection to the passages adduced. It would not detract from the validity of this discussion for Mr. Holyoake to favour me early with the defects of Christianity, for should he reserve them till the time is too far advanced for them either to be properly considered, or fully answered, that method would appear more like the art of debate than a fearless investigation into the truth. I state this now, because I am anxious to give some attention to such difficulties; for I have nothing to fear and nothing to hide, but prefer to be openly confronted; and shall give as careful attention to the evils of religion as to the benefits of infidelity. It may fairly be expected that at least during the third night we may have a short outline of the

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points on which Christianity is considered vulnerable, that we may not contend in the dark; whilst the further advantages of Secularism, referred to in Mr. Holyoake's general outline, must not travel out of the record to which he confined himself in the preliminaries of this discussion. It would be a safe rule on this point for Mr. Holyoake to quote from our correspondence in proof that he is not introducing questions foreign to this debate. The passages I quoted from the New Testament, (and they are only specimens of innumerable others,) besides being leading principles —which other passages, consequently, cannot invalidate, but to which they must be subordinate—proved beyond the possibility of doubt, that the duties of this life are neither neglected nor overlooked in the Gospel, and that Secularism, as the inculcation of certain important duties, is eighteen hundred years too late to be original. It would be altogether erroneous, however, to conclude that because Secularism adopts the duties which Christianity enforces, it is indifferent which system we follow: for, first, plagiarism has no merit, and, secondly, the same acts are of different moral quality, according to the motives from which they are performed. A gift for praise, or for bribery, and from motives of kindness, is a different thing in morals, though the mechanical act is the same; and Christianity deals with motives—looks both at what we do, and why we do it. Mr. Holyoake would scarcely commend the man whose devotion to secular business arises from pure selfishness, though one of the Secular principles is that "care for others is a well-understood principle of self-defence." How far self-defence does lead men to care for others, is manifest from the history of mankind, and the transactions of daily life. The tyrant's self-defence is to trample on his slaves, and this is the motive Secularism furnishes, namely, a narrow selfishness, which is not rectified by any reference to a higher tribunal, and to the utility that is only a safe guide when viewed in the light of a just and universal judge. The advantage of Secularism is that it deprives man of various motives for purity, justice, and kindness: it takes away the argument for patient continuance in well-doing, knowing that in due season we shall reap if we faint not: it tells us that we must reap here if we mean to reap at all; this principle does not exclude a regard for our personal welfare at the expense of our integrity; as it is a hundred times affirmed in the *Reasoner*, and other Secular works, that there are thousands who would openly join the Secularists if there were no civil and social disadvantages. It is declared that many infidels are waiting till it is safe to avow themselves. Christ and his Apostles, and the glorious army of Martyrs, bought our safety at a dearer rate, and the motives of the Gospel, its present spiritual aids, the powers of

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the world to come, inspire men with a true heroism of endurance, without waiting for a safe place and secure time, and defending others from error by succumbing to it themselves, till it is destroyed by a miracle of some Secular spiritual dependence. What life, then, to quicken men in the performance of moral duties, in the face of public scorn, in opposition to outward violence or inward frailty, does Secularism afford? Has it not even now abandoned the word Atheist for Non-theist, because the latter is more genteel? And does it not hide Non-theist in Secularist to propitiate public feeling, after commencing with the boast of "daring opinion?" Did Christianity take down its flag, because a crucified Saviour was a term of contempt? Was the Reformation a change of the word Christian to Spiritualist, as infidelity reforms by adopting the term Secularist? Did the Reformation advance by receding from Christianity, or by a return to it? What, then, have they done in social duties, beyond teaching a system whose followers wait in wise self-defence, till it is safe to open other men's eyes? whilst the system itself, with the same frankness, adopts a new name, as the only escape from its old character. True, one benefit is often paraded. We are told, in many forms—in pamphlets, lectures, speeches, and periodicals—that "Death opens his doors as wide to the pauper as to the king." This may be some advantage, but it is a well-worn quotation from Horace. Every one knows that the gates of death are open on this side; Christ came to open them on the other. Secularism makes it a prison; Christianity makes it a passage to glory, honour, and immortality, open to pauper and prince, that may be entered by all who desire; it levels men upwards, and offers that dignity to every man which on earth only one in a nation can enjoy—a crown of glory, which the Lord will give to all them that love his appearing. The only fitting emblem of the common dignity is that which on earth can belong to only one amongst millions. Secularism is the logic of death; Christianity is the logic of eternal life. The moral grandeur of a man's actions depends on the breadth of his principles; and that which is insignificant in itself, receives a moral intensity and greatness, from the dignity of those considerations out of which it arises; but "a wise self-defence," an eye to our secular welfare, minding the main chance, is one of the most ordinary motives, beyond which, however, Secularism cannot raise us, because we must reap here, and find on earth our all; Death only opens his gates to shut us in; whilst the Christian can declare, in the words of a weighty author—

"Death, instead of taking away anything from us, gives us all, the perfection of our natures; sets us at liberty, both from our

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bodily desires and others' domination; makes the servant free from his master. It doth not bring us into darkness, but takes darkness out of us, us out of darkness, and puts us into marvellous light. Nothing perishes or is destroyed by death, but the veil and covering which is wont to be done away from all ripe fruit. It brings us out of a dark dungeon, through the crannies whereof our sight of light is but weak and small, and brings us into an open liberty, an estate of light and life unveiled and perpetual. It takes us out of that mortality which began with our birth, and now ends to bring us into that life which shall never end. This day, which thou fearest as thy last, is thy birthday into eternity."

I shall come, in the next place, to notice the analysis of the meaning of the terms employed in Mr. Holyoake's second proposition—that "science is the providence of life, and that spiritual dependence may lead to material destruction." The essential rule for all inquiries is, that our leading terms shall have a definite meaning, and that we shall keep them to that application, otherwise we do not properly know what we speak of. The secular terms are not defined, or are explained by others that need explanation. The second proposition is unaccompanied with any scientific definition. The phrases, "spiritual dependence" and "material destruction," are very wide. What is "spiritual?"—what is "material?" If by "spiritual" is meant the Divine being—dependence on him; and if "the providence of man" is brought into opposition with the providence of God, as seems to be the case, this should be affirmed plainly, and then the statement could be examined in that light. We shall first analyze the assertion in the strict philosophical acceptation of the terms. "Material" is that whose entire known qualities may be tested by the senses: "spiritual" is that whose qualities are not appreciable by the senses, but are related to our thoughts. Are we, then, to have more dependence on what is material than on what is spiritual? and is not dependence itself a spiritual act? We know nothing of material things except our mental conclusions. Many of those things we appear to see are but quick spiritual processes by which we interpret and remember. In dealing with material objects, we have nothing to depend upon but what is spiritual—the processes of our own thoughts, which have continually to correct the impressions of sense. Matter itself, as used for that external substance whose qualities affect our senses, is a spiritual suggestion to explain the basis of those qualities. Colour and sound, heat and cold, taste and smell, are sensations in us, not even qualities in objects. Matter itself is supplied mentally to account for phenomena. Matter is said by science to be infinitely divisible, composed of minute atoms, none of which

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has been discovered. The atomic theory is a spiritual inference, and matter is unknown. Science teaches us that there is repulsion between all particles; that they never touch, but remain at insensible distances. Everything we know of is compressible; nor is it an absurd supposition that the world could by force be reduced into a very small compass. Matter being thus composed of atoms, no one of which we can see, and these being separated, even in the densest bodies, by interstices that we cannot perceive, the oneness we give to any object is perfectly notional. A tree is as truly composed of millions of particles as a nation is of millions of individuals; therefore we deal with all things called material in an ideal way, and depend upon our ideas. If we consider the term "nature" as standing for the aggregate of all material things, the universe is personified in our thoughts; and men speak of the wisdom of nature, whilst Secularists profess to reverence her mysteries. But is not nature, in this sense, an ideal creation, by which we give unity to our observations of sensible things? No one has explored all nature. Various inquirers record their observations, and the general student learns more from books, the digest of other men's inferences, than from his own observations; whilst a record of all these observations and inferences does not embrace the whole of nature; and therefore to speak of nature is to speak of what is, for the most part, beyond us—a spiritual inference, whether as to the extent or the duration of what is so termed. We have, therefore, nothing but spiritual dependence in material things—in scientific inquiries, which are the engagement of genius, talent, and spiritual industry in research, experiment, and inference. But when we further cheat ourselves with words, and having given the term "nature" to the sum of physical objects, and by conjecture and reason extended these beyond our own knowlege;—when we advance to the idea of nature as something different to these parts of which it is composed, and imagine in the whole, a wisdom which is not in the parts, we are still more ideal, and confess the want of a presiding Ruler, by substituting the mythology of a presiding Nature, in addition to the objects of which nature is composed. When, instead of the trees, fields, rivers, and animals which constitute nature, we speak of some general wisdom that is not in the parts, we theologize in our scepticism, and are necessitated to worship the calves of Dan and Bethel instead of the living God. A tree i sconfessedly incapable of its own growth, but a forest of trees, each one being foolish, becomes an aggregate of wisdom, and the matter is plain; we cannot account for any one thing, but we put all together, and call them nature; and with this spiritual dependence on something independent of material realities, find

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a sceptical satisfaction. For even Secularists do not follow the rule of inquiry only into the order of nature or list of facts; they invoke some goddess, and fall prostrate before a spiritual hallucination. They are quite transcendental, and write with grateful emotions towards a phantom, which takes that place in their minds that belongs to the Universal Spirit, whose room in man's soul cannot be filled up by material things: but man's insatiable craving is mocked by the myth of a wise mother called Nature, which is the same in Atheism or Non-theism as the Church is in systems of priestcraft—myths both, and concessions to the Grand Reality, since men must have some substitute for power in nature and authority in religion. This mythical nature, then, is the *simulacrum* of God, and is the spiritual dependence of those who vainly seek reliance on material things. Not only are matter and nature as the aggregate of physical existences, and nature as the wise agent in the process of creation, spiritual conceptions; but even in legitimate science the phrase, "laws of nature," is a metaphorical expression, by which men are often misled—always, indeed, when they are supposed to account for events, instead of stating the order of their occurrence. One event we cannot explain; it is repeated many times, and we call it a law, according to which or by which it occurs, instead of confining ourselves to the facts of the case, which is only another confession that we require something beyond physical facts—namely, a method of accounting for them; and when we overlook the true explanation, that these occur regularly by the will of God, are real laws of his, we are again forced into concession to the truth by creating an idol of it, and refer to laws of our own imagining, laws of a nature which is not real, the myths of a myth, because we do not acknowledge that the visible things are symbols of the Creator's eternal power and Godhead. But when in legitimate science we confine our language to a register of facts, and arrange those facts into a system, and form theories upon them, this pursuit of a science is a spiritual process in which our dependence is on the strictness of our observations, and the accuracy of our deductions. Therefore it is impossible to distinguish science from spiritual dependence. Thus, in the case of matter we perceive qualities, and by a spiritual tendency imagine a substance, and then convert all substances into the aggregate of nature, and then expand nature into a notional existence, presiding over this aggregate; and then arrange events into different series, and call them laws, the laws of that nature in its secondary meaning: and, therefore, in all legitimate science, as well as conjectural or poetical embellishments wherein we personify and apostrophize nature, we see nothing but a sys-

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tematic statement of inferences and conjectures, founded on the separate individual objects and occurrences. For as God creates outward nature, so man creates the inward nature called science, which is a spiritual product from the exercise of man's intellect on God's works. The various theories of science in all branches, are so many stages of man's conclusions, as in the phlogistic theory to account for combustion, which is now abandoned, though combustion goes on. The atomic theory is the fruit of reason in chemistry; so is Davy's Safety Lamp—a theory of flame applied to the practice of life—and without the spiritual inventor we should have no material defence. Astronomy is not learned from the senses. We now believe that the earth goes round the sun, not because we see the sun rise, but because we trust the spiritual arguments of philosophers whose reason contradicts our senses. Dependence on the regularity of nature which all men cherish, even those who are not Secularists,—for mankind have not been allowed to wait till this present time, for the fashion of free inquiry, which like the fashion of this world passeth away:—this common dependence on the regularity of nature, and the fixed properties of things, is a spiritual dependence: it rests solely on the laws of our mind, not on the laws of nature: we expect fire to burn again; expectation is a spiritual act; we look for to-morrow's sunrise, simply because our minds are so constituted as to anticipate a recurrence of similar events; we have not seen to-morrow, we have it not for a material dependence. All our confidence in the future of material nature, by which we are guided in all our actions, rests on a spiritual law, a tendency in our minds to expect a repetition of what has been experienced. This therefore is spiritual, and is not man's providence nor the result of science, but is the providence of God, who made us so to expect, and who, by the regularity of nature, meets our expectations. So that both the doctrine of Nature is ideal, and our notions of nature and the records of science; whilst our confidence in to-morrow's sunrise is a law of mind, not of matter; and, therefore, to abandon and to depreciate spiritual dependence, is to abandon and depreciate the only dependence possible to man.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—If that is the kind of opposition to which our views are to be subjected, I see no objection to it. The practical question on which I have been speaking this evening has been greatly overlooked; and I shall, after a few remarks upon such incidental points as had any relation to this night's discussion, proceed to state further the sense in which we maintain the propositions which you have heard announced. First, however, I

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ought perhaps on this night to make an announcement. In our last night's debate we were several times told that *I* proposed to remove Christianity and substitute Secularism in its stead. These were the words of the general proposition which was read from the chair; but that proposition was of Mr. Grant's own writing, and the extravagant element in it was of his own invention. It is absurd to propose the entire removal of Christianity, in which there are some points of truth and discipline which we have no wish to see cancelled in our land. Five years ago, as Mr. Grant is aware, we defined our object theologically as an opposition to Christian *error*, and not to Christian *truth*. Why I accepted the proposition Mr. Grant drew up was this—that he told me it meant in other words, "Wherein consists the superiority of our gospel over the gospel of Jesus Christ." This is a reasonable inquiry, but the words "*removal* of Christianity and the substitution of Secularism" are words which he has put into my mouth, and for the extravagance of which I did not foresee that he intended to make me responsible. Again, you were told that our views were narrow and sensual; but if we are told to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, which we are told is a part of Christian Secularism—if that be the object of Christian Secularism, then how comes it that when we propose to do the same thing it is described as sensual in us and exalted in them? Some of my remarks to-night were founded upon Christianity. I quoted Solomon—he, it seems, is not a Christian authority; I quoted the apostles—no notice was taken of what I said of their writings. When I ask Mr. Grant what his opinions are, and to what book I may refer for them, he refers me to the Scriptures; and when I ask him to point out what particular principles I shall find there, he tells me again to read that book and judge for myself. But the moment I bring forth any passage from that book, he tells me immediately that it is not Christianity. I want him, therefore, to tell me what it is that he calls Christianity. If it be the Bible, I have a right to refer to it. I remember that on a former evening when he read passages which I told him were contradicted by many other passages, he turned round and said, "Are not these also here?" I say to him therefore, that I have quoted passages from the Scriptures; and are not these also here? He himself gave us as one of the Christian principles, "Lay not up treasures upon earth, but lay up treasures in heaven." Why the very Savings Banks in the country contradict the maxim, "Lay not up treasures upon earth." You have been told something about Christianity opening the gate of death upon the other side. What I put to Mr. Grant is—a question I have put to him more than once—to tell me what there is in so much of Secularism as

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he has heard, that is so criminal, that it furnishes any reason for saying that the same gate should not be open to us. He ended his speech on the last evening by saying that "at the day of judgment it would not be asked, how much we had abstracted from man to serve God, how much we had neglected humanity to honour him—no such thing, but the question would be, "Did you visit me in prison? did you feed me when hungry? did you clothe me when naked?" And the answer of the Christian religion is, "Inasmuch as ye did it to humanity, to those who are in this world, ye did it unto me; for the way to receive the approbation of God, in a future life, is to do our duty towards our fellow-men as well as we are able." Then I say, according to Mr. Grant's own showing we are as much entitled to have that eternal gate opened as he is himself. The points on which I thought he would have fastened, and have given us instruction, he has hitherto omitted. The principal thing I seek to establish in all these discussions is this—that to do well is sufficient, believe what you may. Christianity says, you are to have both faith and works; our doctrine is, that if we work well, work honestly, work usefully, work as well as we are able, that is sufficient, and that becomes a desert, that good works alone will save us, and ought to save us. There is something broad enough and plain enough in that for Mr. Grant to grapple with if he is so disposed. There lies the issue of the whole difficulty between us. Wherever we find passages in the New Testament which are compatible with our moral sense of human duty, we are glad to find them and to acknowledge our obligation to them; but where we find others inconsonant we reject them just as readily as we accept the former, and we hold ourselves to be right and innocent in so doing. We seek no other means of qualifying ourselves for an eternal world than in well-doing. We believe in well-doing—we believe that is sufficient—we believe that is honourable—we believe that is deserving—we believe that is innocent—we believe that no just God will ever disown us if we do as well as we are able. That is our doctrine, and we put aside your faith, we put aside every other qualification. There is a broad point of difference between us. We talk of science, and Mr. Grant is mystified as to what we can mean by it—we mean by science what I have said—those methodized agencies which are at our command—that systematized knowledge which enables us to use the powers of nature for human benefit; and I mean by spiritual dependency, application to heaven by prayer expecting that help will come to us. I find one Rev. Newman Hall, at a late meeting of Congregational dissenters, of which Mr. Grant was one, laying it down that "the efficacy of prayer was a fundamental principal of Independency." Now we have no faith whatever in prayer; we do

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not in any way believe in its efficacy; and we say, if you tell us that Providence interferes in human affairs, you only discourage human exertion, and you tell us that which does not prove to be true in the end. Do you not tell us that the very hairs of our heads are numbered, and that not a sparrow falls to the ground without God's permission? Yet hear what this doctrine amounts to in the language of the Rev. Sidney Smith: "A belief that Providence interferes in all little actions, refers all merit and demerit to bad and good fortune, and causes the successful man to be always considered as a good man, and the unhappy man as an object of divine vengeance. It furnishes ignorant and designing men with power which is sure to be abused. The cry of 'a judgment! a judgment!' it is always easy to make, but not easy to resist. It encourages the grossest superstition; for if Deity rewards and punishes on every slight occasion it is quite impossible but that such a helpless being as man will set himself to work and discover the intentions of heaven in the appearances of outward nature, and to apply all the phenomena of thunder and lightning and wind, and every striking appearance, to the regulation of his own conduct; just as the poor Methodist, when he rode into Piccadilly in a thunder-storm, imagined that all the uproar of the elements was a hint to him not to preach in Mr. Romaine's chapel. This doctrine of theocracy must place an excessive power in the hands of the clergy. It applies so instantly and so tremendously to men's hopes and fears, that it must make the priest omnipotent over the people, as it always has done where it has been established. It has (mark these words) *a great tendency to check human exertion* and to prevent the employment of those secondary means of effecting an object which are at our disposal." Now if Mr. Grant does not admit the truth of this he advocates a doctrine which has a tendency to check human endeavour; and if he does admit the truth of this language, then how does he reconcile that with his professed creed?

Some of the solemnest words of the New Testament assure the humble believer that our heavenly Father watches over us, his creatures,—an ever-present help in time of need. The deepest, the most personal consolation of Christianity consists in that fact; and yet if that doctrine of divine interference be not true, those consolations are no consolations at all. When we say that Secularism has an advantage over Christianity, the assertion is to some extent borne out by the Rev. Mr. Smith's admission, that the doctrine of providential interference in small things has a tendency to discourage human exertion. You must therefore give up the doctrine in this respect; and to whatever extent you do relinquish it you coincide with our own position. If you hold that Providence

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does not interpose in the little actions of life—which little actions, remember, make up the sum of existence of the mass of mankind—it is clear that Heaven does not vouchsafe special care for us in little things, and therefore we cannot be wrong in telling mankind to take care of themselves. Now it is not needful to my argument to contend that prayer never had any efficacy—it may have been the source of material advantage, but the question is, will it bring material aid now? It is in vain that the miner descends into the earth with a prayer on his lips unless he carries, what Mr. Grant has referred to, a Davy lamp in his hand. A ship-load of clergymen would be in danger of perishing if you suffer the *Amazon* once to take fire. During the prevalence of a pestilence an hospital is of more value than a college of theologians. When the cholera visitation is near, the Physician, and not the Priest, is our best dependence; and those whom medical aid cannot save must inevitably die. Are we not, therefore, right in saying that science is the Providence of life? Mr. Birch, in his "Philosophy and Religion of Shakspere," recites an impressive passage between Queen Elizabeth and Queen Margaret. Queen Elizabeth, in her maternal anxiety for the welfare of her children, finds consolation in depending upon God, and exclaims:—

> "Wilt thou, O God, fly from such gentle lambs,
> And throw them in the entrails of the wolf?
> When didst thou sleep when such a deed was done?"

To this eloquent and passionate appeal, Margaret from her larger experience answers in words which crush all hope, and to which there is no answer, "God has done it"—

> "When holy Harry died, and my sweet son."

Gentlemen, this is, no doubt, at first sight a sad and desolating truth to those who have been cradled in supernatural dependency; but how much more desolating is the delusion when the discovery of it first breaks upon us over the grave! Do you ask what benefits flow from our doctrine? Why for many years to come the place of the Religious Tract Society might be supplied by a Scientific Tract Society; and it would be well with us were our Churches and Chapels also converted into Temples of Science. One would think that he who is said to be the God of nature could not be displeased that his creatures, even on the Sabbath-day, should be made acquainted with the works of nature. Prayers quite as holy might ascend from the Laboratory as ever ascended from the Vestry. To make men wise and liberal, which

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is the tendency of all science, would surely be as sweet a tribute to the skies as to make them, as they often now are made—merely exclusive by clerical ministration. We learn to judge from experience, and choose between Prayer and Science. The whole science of political economy is a scientific protest against the popular trust in Providence. A million of our Irish brethren who lately perished of famine have exploded for ever the popular belief of Englishmen, that where God sends mouths he also sends meat. Of old there was a sublime dependence of the aged on Providence. How sweet was the trust of the young man who remembered his Creator in the days of his youth that it might be well with him in the land! But how have our Poor-houses bitterly dissipated this delusion! Every church is now connected with an Assurance Office; and the race of Actuaries are more active opponents of trust in Providence than any Secular lecturers, Mr. Neison does more to advance Secularism in a single month than Dr. Cumming will be able to undo in his whole life. The estimate of Prayer among men of business answers to the description of it given in Pope's Homer. Prayer, you know, which should precede us in order to save us, can only scream after the mischief is over:

> "Prayers are Jove's daughters of celestial race,
> Lame are their feet, and wrinkled is their face;
> With humble mien and with dejected eyes,
> Constant they *follow* where injustice flies;
> Injustice swift, erect, and unconfined,
> Sweeps the wide earth, and tramples o'er mankind."

Do you ask what advantage is there in this doctrine? I answer, all the advantage of being undeceived. Does any man say that the doctrine of providential interference is an agreeable one, and that he prefers to believe it? To such I have no message. Those who reason so are looking for comfort, and not for truth. He who on stepping into a leaky vessel that would not weather the storm, would rather not be told that inconvenient truth, is not a person entitled to be saved. But in the great voyage of life, if the theological vessel of special interposition will not keep out the water, we say rather, let us know the truth that we may seek the vessel of science that may do it. To speak what we suppose to be the truth in self-protection is not blasphemy—it is merely honest warning; it is not "portentous heroism," but prudence. But it is said we are without God in the world; but remember if it be so, that is not our fault. We would rather that your theory were true, and that light could be had in darkness and help in the hour of danger. It better comports with human feebleness and harsh

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destiny that it should be so. But if the doctrine be not true, surely it is better that we know it. Could the doctrine of divine aid be reduced to intelligible conditions, Religion would be reinstated in its ancient influence: for a reasonable certainty and an unfailing trust, men would fulfil any conditions possible to humanity. Faith no longer supplies implicit confidence, and the practical tone of our day is impatient of that teaching which keeps the word of promise to the ear and breaks it to the hope.

Could we keep before us the first sad view of life which breaks in upon the working man, whether he be a white slave or a black one, we should be able to see this advocacy from a more advantageous point. We should learn at once sternness and moderation. Do we not find ourselves at once in an *armed* world where Might is God and Poverty is fettered? Every stick and stone, every blade of grass, every bird and flower, every penniless man, woman, and child, has an owner in this England of ours no less than in New Orleans. The bayonet or baton bristles round every altar, at the corner of every lane and every street. Effort, in its moral and energetic sense, is the only study worth a moment's attention by the workman or the slave. What weaknesses are mankind reduced to by the conventionalisms of opinion! Were men intellectually resolute instead of mourning when disaster comes, they would watch with relentless vigilance the purport of that teaching which, however well intended, whispers in the ears of childhood those fatal lessons of spiritual dependence which end in all the grossness of material destruction. I have time to add one instance which may serve to throw a light in Mr. Grant's way, as to the sort of dependence which we mean. We say, if Providence does not interfere in human affairs, why is it not said so openly and explicitly? and if once confessed it would be a confession of the prudence and rightfulness of our own Secular course. It has long seemed to me the most serious libel on the character of Deity to assume for one moment that he interferes in human exigencies. A mountain of desolating facts rises up to shame into silence the hazardous supposition. Was not the whole land a short time ago convulsed with horror at the fate of the *Amazon*? There was not a wretch in the whole country, whose slumbering humanity would not have been aroused in the presence of that dismal catastrophe. Hardly a felon could have heard the story without sighing for power to render aid. The noble and impatient speech of Miranda to Prospero, when she saw a shipwreck of another kind, leaped at once to the nation's tongue:

> "If by your art, my dearest father, you have
> Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them:

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The sky it seems would pour down stinking pitch
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffer'd
With those that I saw suffer! a brave vessel,
Who had no doubt some noble creatures in her,
Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls! they perished!
Had I been any God of power I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
It should the good ship so have swallowed, and
The freighting souls within her."

This is the natural thought of every onlooker under such circumstances. Nor do I see how any one, in the face of such facts, can hold that there is a special providence without proclaiming it to be of limited power or of limited humanity, or owning that the Divine administration of this world is conducted on principles inapplicable and inexplicable to humanity, and is at once beyond our criticism, and therefore incapable of affording us instruction.

MR. MORLEY:—I am anxious for one minute to set myself right with Mr. Holyoake. I was a party, as one of the chairmen, last week, to the reading of the following sentence—it was read by Mr. Syme, Mr. Holyoake's chairman: "What advantages would accrue to mankind generally, and the working classes in particular, by the removal of Christianity and the substitution of Secularism in its place." Now, on my honour, I would be no party, if I knew it, to any proceeding in connection with this discussion that was not perfectly fair and perfectly straight-forward. I understand Mr. Holyoake to say that this sentence is Mr. Grant's, and not his. Now I was present at a meeting at which Mr. Syme (Mr. Holyoake's chairman), and Mr. Holyoake's brother, were present, and I distinctly understood that the phrase as it was read was adopted by Mr. Holyoake. I wish to have that made perfectly straight and clear; otherwise I have been a party to misrepresentation. I beg to insist on an answer to this. Mr. Holyoake's brother will do me the justice to say whether I am right or wrong in what I have said.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—It is my place to answer the question. I accepted the proposition. I said so in the words I used. I said, "Why I accepted the proposition Mr. Grant drew up was because he told me it meant in other words, wherein consists the superiority of our gospel, or views, over the gospel of Jesus Christ." I thought it was in that sense he would use them, and that he would not make me responsible for the extravagant element in them—that of wishing to remove the whole of Christianity.

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MR. MORLEY:—I am bound to say I recognize those words as having been used by Mr. Holyoake—I say it frankly. But the impression surely was that the proposition was Mr. Grant's, and that there had not been a clear understanding.

MR. GRANT:—Mr. Chairman, I quite understand the nature of Mr. Holyoake's indirect disavowal and direct avowal of the statement that he has come this evening to discuss. It would have been very much better if he had plainly made any opposition to it when we discussed it in letters beforehand. However, I need say nothing upon that subject, but simply tell you that as Mr. Holyoake agreed that the correspondence should be the preface to this discussion, you will quite understand the whole of that question. I think every speech Mr. Holyoake has commenced he has begun by saying—If this is the sort of opposition we are to have we need not fear much. Invariably he has commenced with some disparaging observations of that kind. He does not now propose to remove Christianity, and if he did, he could not remove it. The proposition he calls my extravagance, but he was extravagant enough to adopt it, and not wise enough to complain of it till now that he cannot maintain it. He quotes Solomon, and is very much surprised that I do not know he is a Christian authority, and tells me certain passages are in the Bible, and asks me if that is not Christianity. Does he not know that Judaism is in the Bible as well? Now, it is altogether unnecessary for me to detain you long here upon the perversions of prayer and providence which Mr. Holyoake entirely mistook, just as much as he mistook the questions of the Savings Bank. All of you know well that that was altogether either a misapprehension or a misrepresentation of the principle of laying up treasure in heaven. Mr. Holyoake declared, that if they perform all the duties of this life, then they are safe, on my principle. He has a method of saying a thing over again after it has been answered. That was answered before. So was this statement about seeking first the kingdom of God. That was explained. Let him answer my explanation, and then I will take notice of his rejoinder. Mr. Holyoake seems to think providence lies wholly in special interference. The whole work of nature is providence, and it interferes in everything, and rules all things; and the very fact of nature being regular, is one of the greatest blessings, for if it did not happen that fire would always burn and water always drown, we could never be certain of a single action of our lives. And therefore the wisdom of God's providence, is that very thing which Mr. Holyoake accuses Divine providence of. And then, as to this providence, only let me ask Mr. Holyoake if he does not often praise nature, if she is not often

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very wise, if she is not always very good? Why did not nature step forth and stop that burning, and prevent those people being drowned? Or if Mr. Holyoake had been there, instead of some clergy, what would he have done? Why, ladies and gentlemen, he would have read the second proposition, "Science, the providence of man; spiritual dependence may lead you to material destruction." Would it have put the fire out? Ladies and gentlemen, I was showing you that all our dependence is spiritual, and I wish to carry this argument out very clearly, because as Mr. Holyoake sees fit to pass by my objections, I do not intend to wait simply to reply to particular statements of his, but to go through a great, broad view of the question, that you may understand my side very clearly. The truth that we depend upon spiritual things is more obvious still in mathematics, which is the only science of demonstration, and which is purely spiritual, for mixed mathematics, or the application of our thoughts to nature, enters at once into probability. The region of certainty and demonstration is essentially mathematical—that is, a science built upon notions in which we have undoubted knowledge, which is distinguished by Hume on this very ground from "matters of fact"—physical existences and events, which are in the region of probability. Since, then, the safest science is that which has purely to do with thoughts—for our demonstrations, though aided by diagrams, do not depend upon the accuracy of the lines or figures, but upon the correctness of our ideas, and the weakest place in Euclid is that which seems to require or imply superposition or measurement, as a physical or ocular demonstration—from this we infer that mind is the most real existence, since the science which is independent of matter, and purely ideal, is the only sphere of demonstration; which shows further, that, in the strict meaning of the words, spiritual dependence is not only the main one, but the safest in all the range of human speculation. And this logical view of the matter may be confirmed by the favourite profession of freethinkers, that they rely on reason. In a piece published as "A Hortative," or a kind of secular sermon, we have the following eloquent appeal. To remove "the great evils" which "appalled" the writer, he aims at "the latent energies of those who are competent to wield the sceptre of humanity;" and after enumerating "truth" and the "simplest ratiocination" as the instruments, he observes:—"These are the weapons of our warfare; with these we hope to weaken prejudice and bigotry. Minions of superstition! will you, I ask, enlist under this banner? Then search for truth, educate your understanding, listen to nature's master-piece, reason." (*Reasoner*," vol. iii. p. 440.) This is rather confusing,

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since generally it is reason that is listening to nature; and now reason is nature's master-piece, to which we are to listen: not surely with our outward ears. This first and last resort of Secularists is, therefore, spiritual. They propose nothing else but Reason. Now, what is reason, if not spiritual? It is not long or short, broad or narrow; it cannot be weighed in scales, tested by chemicals, seen by the eye, tasted by the palate; it is purely spiritual. So the only dependence they advocate is a spiritual dependence. It may be replied to this argument, that they do not mean to speak so strictly of material and spiritual: but if so they are not in a position to advocate a new view of human nature and duty, which is a question of reason, and demands the nicest philosophical accuracy. Some difficulty may arise respecting this rule for preferring the spiritual to the material, from the fact, that the chief writer on the Metaphysics of Secularism observes, that there is "an utter impossibility of imagining the existence of aught else than a material substance." It is true, Mr. Chilton declined to define matter, since he does not understand it, but knows that spirit is unintelligible, and therefore there is no such thing, but only matter, which is equally mysterious. Respecting Dr. Dick's "Christian Philosopher," this writer observes:—"For a man to lay down a dogma, and argue from it as fact, is evidence of either ignorance or arrogance; but for a man to assert a dogma which his own arguments or evidence subverts is folly." Now, these remarks, being from "*The Reasoner*," on a Christian, we may perhaps borrow them to describe the dogmas we are examining; whilst the same Article will supply Mr. Holyoake with an answer to this analysis of the philosophy of his second benefit. Respecting "The Christian Philosopher," Mr. Chilton observes:—"Of all classes of philosophers the Christian is the most extraordinary and anomalous. I can understand moral philosophy, social philosophy, and scientific philosophy, but Christian philosophy is beyond my comprehension. What *has* a Christian to do with philosophy? What *can* he have to do with it?" (*Reasoner*, vol. iii. p. 373.) If Mr. Holyoake sympathizes with these inquiries, he will not feel bound to give us satisfaction, though he cannot complain if we earnestly seek it—as a secular science should be at least comprehensible, and not rest on a mysterious jugglery of unexplained or misapplied terms of spiritual philosophy. As in the physical sciences which relate to outward nature we have proved it vain to abandon spiritual dependence on the mind which interprets nature—as Bacon's Improved Physics was an improved logic, no material addition, but a spiritual correction—as all the blunders about nature arise not from men's defective senses, but from the ignorance

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of their minds—as the clown sees more of nature than the philosopher, but knows less about it—as most men are equal in their senses, but differ intellectually as to scientific knowledge only in spiritual cultivation—as reason, which is spiritual, is the only corrective affirmed by Secularists—as our dependence on nature is a spiritual law, and thus science is not to be distinguished from spiritual dependence, it will also be obvious, on examination, that the science of society is equally spiritual. Any general improvement of the condition of mankind, socially, politically, religiously, must result from a careful examination of history, logical deductions from it, a study of the nature of man and what is adapted to him: a fundamental mistake on these subjects (that is, a wrong idea) may lead to material destruction. If it may not, neither Secularists nor Communists need to write or speak on the subject. Our whole life on earth, the entire structure and arrangements of society, rests on notions: free trade is a new idea applied to practice; spiritual dependence on the theory of protection might have led to a famine in England. And the Secularists present us now with nothing else than spiritual dependence on their notions. Society and nature, then, are matters in which we are to spiritually speculate, and act on nothing but our conclusions. This is confessed in the fact that all reformers seek to alter our opinions. They know that there will be no new state of society while the old ideas rule—for ideas do rule the world. We cannot escape spiritual dependence, then, in nature or in society, since we act in and towards both according to our conceptions; and this is confessed by all innovators, who bring three new propositions as the future pillars of the world. This doctrine is not only true, in the general, of society and nature, physical science and social economy, but is true of all individual actions and business pursuits. We act according to what seems pleasant, or profitable, or respectable, or conscientious. We trust to a business speculation, and may be materially ruined; but all originates in our thoughts; which proves that the new theory neither saves us from spiritual dependence nor from material destruction, whilst it illustrates the real power and wisdom of Christianity, which, saying little about physical force, introduces those great thoughts of love towards God and man—those grand hopes and aspirations after a glorious destiny—those solemn considerations of responsibility, which are the great motive power of moral, social, and physical improvement. And whilst Secularism comes and makes such loud protestations about the importance of this life, Christianity quietly elevates it, by the expectation of something more sublime, to which this is the introduction. Whilst Secularism makes a noise, and bustles about progress, Christianity

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has brought the civilized world to its present hopefulness; and leaving this party of progress to scream and whistle as the safety-valve, putting the nervous into a flutter, Christianity is within as the noiseless steam, pushing along the train of human advancement with quiet and resistless force,—coming not with observation, pomp, and show, but pursuing its course with the grand stillness which characterizes the works of the same God who carries on the operations of nature without wheels and pulleys, with no creaking, and in so incomprehensible a manner, that they who understand not that our bodily members move at the volition of an invisible agent, create the ties of imaginary laws to hold and bind the universe together. The new material dependence afforded by Secularism has not been shown; and till it is understood, we are not likely to appreciate the advantage. It should be shown in plain language what further or different dependence on science Mr. Holyoake now advocates than has been acknowledged and followed by Christian, pagan, and Jew, all over the world, from the beginning of time until now. Secondly, avoiding large and general terms, which may cover all parties and opinions, he should state what beneficial peculiarity Secularism has introduced into the study of science, to render the pursuit of it more successful. Thirdly, he should give some instances of the successful application of this new, undefined, and undescribed method, to the enlargement of human knowledge, the increase of man's mastery over nature, and an addition to the commodities and enjoyments of human life. If we are told none of these things, our time is wasted with irrelevant observations on Christianity, instead of a simple development of the benefits of Secularism. I do not mean an enumeration of the large promises they make, but a statement of the work they have done, and how this work is related to any principles they have and which we have not. It is easy to tell you what they have not done. They did not invent railways by this method. Surely these are methods of progress. They did not invent writing nor printing; they did not introduce the post-office system; they did not discover the caloric method, now successfully applied to vessels, and promising to supersede steam before they will supersede Christianity. They did not invent the telegraph; they did not build and fill the Crystal Palace. At one of their *soirées*, it is recorded as a smart saying that it was said the want of the age is good potatoes. Their new way of science has not met and mastered the potato blight. Mr. Holyoake says science would annihilate the cholera, while we pray against it: he has not yet told us how science may do it. We look to Secularism in vain for help in anything. All it can perform is to assume to itself all the science others have created, praise material depend-

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ence as the safety afforded by nature, which we had already enjoyed as the providence of the Creator. They bring us nothing new, but praise what we had before, only under a new name, as something which they have discovered. They found the world, the Christian world pre-eminently, advancing at an unprecedented rate in all the arts and sciences, to which none have contributed so much as Christian authors and Christian clergymen, and which none possess so largely as Christian nations; and their grand addition is a subtraction,—as they ask the devout to cease their prayers, and Christians to abandon that Gospel which has lifted the world from the imbecility of its old superstition, and fastened especially upon the English race to cultivate them into the grand asylum of freedom, the citadel of true liberty, at which tyrants vainly rage, and from which, as out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will yet shine to emancipate the whole earth. Let them, therefore, cease their empty boasts, and change the desert of their barren propositions into a fruitful field, that will supersede God's providence, which before they were born caused grass to grow for cattle, and herb for the service of man, preserving and blessing both, and which has given to man the capability, and imposed on him the duty, of self-cultivation for his own happiness and the welfare of his fellows, as the most emphatic way of glorifying his Maker. Until the three requisites here laid down are met and satisfied, secularism is a feast of promises, in which its advocates are fruitful, but by which the world cannot live. If a man fills the sick with hopes that the science of the body is certain, if he declares with Mr. Holyoake that sickness is a reproach, if he descants largely on the healing powers of nature, but can bring no remedy for that man's condition—if he cannot either state to a certainty the patient's disease, nor choose out of the existing systems of medicine, nor prescribe from a new one, some specific remedy, he only plays upon credulity and mocks the unfortunate. If a proposed regenerator comes to the nations, and assures them that this life is known, that science is its salvation, that probability is all we have for another, but this is pre-eminent and may be securely happy, and still cannot demonstrate the science of society, decide to our common satisfaction the form of government, monarchical, mixed, democratical, the questions of labour and capital, communism, Fourierism, St. Symonism,—if he cannot understand the currency, nor settle it, as a primary seculary consideration, but still leaves room for as many sects and doubts on this life, as there are about the next; what does it all come to but a delusive promise with which so many have formerly mocked the world? To guard against this disappointment, it is requisite, then, that the three preliminary questions should be settled. Let Mr. Holyoake

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take them down and answer them. What different dependence on science does Secularism afford to that which all acknowledge, and of which all everywhere, and at all times, who know anything of science, gladly avail themselves? Secondly, what particular benefit for the successful study of science does it introduce? Thirdly, in what case has this peculiar benefit added to man's scientific knowledge, and the enjoyment of life? And since in radical questions it is possibly dangerous to change, as, though we know the evils of an existing system, we are favoured only with the promises of another; or since, as they say of life, the present is known, the future only probable, we must be careful in accepting a future system, of which we have had no experience, and can only judge from their past failure! for they have failed in everything they have tried; and because future systems may be different in fact, to what they are on paper (for at present we are invited to a spiritual dependence in Mr. Holyoake's present Gospel of a probable future), to guard ourselves against material destruction, it is necessary to follow tried men into untried paths; therefore we require a fourth preliminary—to know what Mr. Holyoake has already done. Will he, then, state fully to this meeting—I could if I had time—the experiments, schemes and theories with which his past advocacy has been associated—telling us openly how they turned out? For if it appears that he has abandoned every theory and every name before adopted, and if every practical scheme ended in failure, this may modify our expectations, though it will not damp the ardour of his professions. Now, as an illustration of the confidence with which we may trust the conclusions of these gentlemen, and have spiritual dependence on their spiritual notions, I may refer you for a few minutes to an improved version of the first benefit; for Mr. Holyoake has not brought out the improved version given in the *Reasoner*. I will quote it, to show how safely you may depend upon them. "We do not say every man ought to give an exclusive attention to this world, because that would be dogmatism, and exclude the possibility of another man walking by a different light than that by which alone we are able to walk; but as our knowledge is confined to this life, and testimony, conjecture, and probability are all that can be set forth with respect to another life, we think we are justified in giving the precedence to the duties of this state, and in attaching primary importance to the morality of man to man."—(*Reasoner*, vol. xiv. p. 33, 34.) This sentence has the merit of peculiar indistinctness; for, first, if you abandon dogmatism, and do not deny that another man may walk by a different light, why so dogmatically maintain that we cannot walk by Christianity, but that it must be removed? Is not this to "commit" what you call "the old sin of dogmatism?" Secondly, if you give the precedence to knowledge

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in opposition to probability, how can this exalt the present life over the future, since you know only this moment, the rest being probability, complete uncertainty, as to the probity of men, the success of enterprizes, the progress of parties, success in business, continuance in health, and the duration of life itself? The position, therefore, as here remodelled, is totally untenable. Thirdly, if any attention is to be given to another life, it is more important than this. And, fourthly, to subordinate this, life does not exalt morality between man and man, which is more binding because of another life and God. So that the whole scheme is irrelevant. A no less forcible objection to this view of Secularism arises from the fact, that it is evasive of former statements. First, it seems to admit, indirectly, some probability for God and a future life, which, in the *Reasoner*, is contradicted; for there the following suggestion of "T. W. T." is acted upon, under the title of "The Algebraic Deity." Since *x* in algebra stands for the unknown, "instead of God's laws, will, or goodness, we should have *x*'s laws. This would be quite as intelligible and instructive" (vol. iv. p. 238). Now, what is thus dogmatically declared to be unknown, and so indecently parodied, is not a matter of probability; and the questions of a future life and God go together. Then why this evasive sliding scale of pretended probability, except to deceive men as to the real opinions of Secularists? Mr. Holyoake adopted the letter *x*, and wrote it for the word God, until even his readers complained of it, of whom he sometimes complains that unless he is abusive they think he is tame: "Unless we are rancorous, we are not relished" (vol. iv. p. 299). But Mr. Holyoake will, of course, not be rancorous; for in his letter to the Roman Catholic Earl of Arundel he observes: "Your lordship rightly calculated upon the inglorious supineness of our established and non-established clergy; and you well knew both what they will bear and what they deserve, when you published to the world your undisguised contempt of their impotence." This, then, is of course what we deserve. And Mr. Holyoake, who is too just to be rancorous, advises Lord Arundel to leave all insults to us: "The vulgar bigot, the evangelical driveller, will stoop to this; but it ill becomes your lordship to insult your enemy." He is anxious that we should have all the credit for abuse, on the principle of "attaching primary importance to the morality of man to man." Hence, whilst in his first speech he declared, "We do not question the truthfulness of prophets and apostles," he observes, in this letter to Lord Arundel, "We like the St. Pauls least of all the saints, who, being all things to all men, come with craft to take us with guile" (*Reasoner*, vol. v. p. 268). A Catholic lord would agree with him in liking St. Paul

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least of all the saints in the calendar; but Mr. Holyoake is not exempt from being all things to all men to catch us with guile, as here he says one thing and there writes another. And in this he speculates on our twofold ignorance—first, of secular writings, and, secondly, of the meaning of Scripture; for, notwithstanding Robert Cooper's amazing insolence and ignorance—[interruption]—

MR. MOORE:—I rise to say, that these interruptions are unseemly, and to Mr. Holyoake, I am sure, are not at all acceptable. [Interruption.]

MR. GRANT:—Truth is truth, Gentlemen, all the world over. Notwithstanding Robert Cooper's amazing insolence and ignorance—[interruption]—(I am not quite sure whether those voices are spiritual dependencies; Mr. Cooper assumes the name of "infidel" in his book, a name which Mr. Holyoake comes here to disavow)—still it remains the truth, that St. Paul never did catch men with guile, and never said so; but it is an objection of a slanderer, which he proceeds to disprove. Yet this is put down by Mr. Cooper, who assembled the Secular Conference, as Paul's confession of craft, which supposes Paul more clumsy than his calumniator. And Mr. Holyoake repeats the aspersion. It is as wise as that other passage which Mr. Cooper quotes: "I would they were cut off which trouble you." He prints "cut off" in capitals, and seems to think it means cutting their heads off. It means what Mr. Holyoake and his friends recommend about W. W. Broom, the Secular agent at Bradford—namely, to turn him off. These specimens of "primary importance given to the morality of man to man" highly recommend this elevating philosophy, which assumes various shapes for various reasons. Sometimes the Apostles are "truthful," which is complimentary to a Christian audience; sometimes they are "crafty," to suit those readers who prefer the "rancorous." Sometimes this life is all; at others it only has the precedence, out of compliment to the "primary position of morality of man to man," which declares of a Curate's letter, "The curate has not given his name, but we recognize Curatism by its invariable marks, 'zeal for God,' which interpreted means, ill-will to your neighbour" (vol. iv. p. 318). This is primary morality to poor Curates, and being a Secular benefit, will, no doubt, increase their hard earnings.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—First, let me say that I have the most perfect confidence in the utter straightforwardness of Mr. Morley, and I fully admit the propriety of his own statement. I merely made an allusion to the proposition, for the purpose of indicating

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what is essential to this controversy, that the language of entire antagonism which is in it was not put there by myself. I accepted it, as I frequently do accept propositions which other people draw up, because they will not accept my statement of opinion. For five years at least, we have been declaring that our opposition is discriminating, and not indiscriminate; that we do not make war upon Christianity, saying it is all bad; and therefore to propose to remove it entirely, is to contradict what Mr. Grant is well aware we have been for many years declaring. I dislike, I have continually disliked, wholesale antagonism. It is enough, in this world, if we oppose ourselves to what we find to be evil, without opposing also that which we find to be good. In maintaining my proposition, I am maintaining all that is proper to maintain, all I have ever proposed to maintain. I never did propose, nor would I consent to an indiscriminate antagonism to any body or system. Wherever I find truth, I shall be willing to acknowledge it, and be content to declare my own opinions; opposing that, and that only, which I find to be wrong. In these debates the principle which must always prevail is of this nature, —that you have the advantage of a personal comparison of opinion. When any point strikes me on Mr. Grant's side, and I comprehend it and see its bearings, I shall refer to it. But if I do not do this, you will still profit by a comparison of opinions. Therefore if you carefully consider what is said by both of us, you will be able to judge between us, you will be able to judge of many of the instances which Mr. Grant has quoted, and many more which he will quote, taken at random from the *Reasoner*, which extends over a period of several years. He does not always stop to quote that which I say, but what anybody says. Now, I am not responsible for everybody. We have been peculiarly accustomed to admit the widest and freest expression of opinion in our papers; and you will find in my *Reasoner* many, many instances of statements of opinion from which I utterly dissent. I have never thought it right, and I hope I never shall, to prevent any other man from expressing an opinion the opposite of my own. Mr. Chilton would, no doubt, be able to answer for himself; and in reference to Mr. Robert Cooper, that gentleman would be perfectly willing to answer Mr. Grant whenever he shall feel disposed. I may say the same on the part of Mr. Southwell; and whenever those gentlemen are named, they are the persons who ought to defend their own opinions; they do not need that I should enter into a defence for them. With a great part, in fact with nearly the whole of what they say, I certainly coincide. I have sometimes differed from them, and I claim not to be held responsible for opinions which I do not myself en-

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tertain. I will not go into the question whether Christianity has done everything which has been done, and whether we owe to it everything which we enjoy. I can show, and perhaps shall have an opportunity of showing, that this statement is somewhat extravagant. I think I might make Mr. Grant responsible for a great deal done in this world in the name of Christianity, which he would immediately disown. He knows very well that, upon the Continent, there are going on at this hour the most atrocious and unseemly oppressions which ever disgraced the world; and they are going on in the name of Christianity; they are defended by a reference to the Scriptures; the actors are persons as wise as Mr. Grant, as intelligent as Mr. Grant, as sincere as Mr. Grant, as devout as Mr. Grant, who read the Bible, and put upon it such an interpretation as they are able. I have just as much right to charge that on Christianity, as Mr. Grant has to give the credit to Christianity, for anything useful that has been done in the world. He asks what various things of a scientific nature, which we notice, have been the inventions of Secularists. Well, I may as properly ask, If Secularism has not done them, has Christianity been the author of them? The one question is as fair as the other. What I apprehend is, that these things which are Secular have been done upon neutral ground, and in a neutral spirit; they have been done in a spirit of science, which neither belongs exclusively to us nor to the Christian. I have not claimed science and its wonders and achievements, as being works of our hands; but we say that if we can humbly contribute anything in that department, whether on the Lord's-day or on any other day, we are innocent for so doing. I am here only to claim the rightfulness of that course, to free science from the dominion which has been exercised over it, and to distinguish between the popular dependence on supernatural aid, and that dependence which is our material aid, and the source of our real salvation. If it would be legitimate for me to enter into the discussion of what has been done by eminent Secularists, I might point to Lamartine's eulogium on Voltaire, which tells us that when he died the whole nation of France lost a benefactor, one who had awakened in it the elements of liberty which will never die out. I might speak of Paine, of whom it is said that the people of America owed more to his pen, than to the sword of Washington. If I do not enter upon these comparisons, if I do not put one Clergyman by the side of one Freethinker, and ask which has been of the most service to mankind, it is because I consider these things irrelevant in this controversy, and not because I am not able to answer

The main thing which has been alleged has been the
, in what respect science does anything in an independent

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manner, and what contributions we have made, especially in the name of Secularism. We have been referred to various failures which are supposed to have taken place upon our side. I might quote the testimony of a friend of Mr. Grant's (Mr. George Dawson, of Birmingham), whom I remember some months ago distinctly saying that the people of this country owed the agitation for baths, wash-houses, industrial homes, model farms, and the improvement of all the relations of labour, to the agitation of Socialism in this country. If it be true that some plans which we endeavoured to realize did not succeed as we hoped they would, I say there is some credit due to those who have failed; at least as much as is due to those who never attempted anything of the kind. I shall not, however, hide from myself or from you the purpose which we have in view in the establishment of this proposition—that Science is the Providence of life. I understood Mr. Grant to say—with what qualification I know not—that what I had been contending for had been acknowledged by all people in every age of the world. Has it been acknowledged that our dependence must be material, and cannot be realized by being placed in supernatural directions? Have I not said broadly that we distrust the efficacy of prayer? Have I not stated broadly that dependence upon science is not dependence on Providence, either general or special? If I have said all these things, how can it be said, with any exactness of language proper to this controversy, that what I have contended for has been acknowledged by everybody throughout the whole world? The advantage of this doctrine (which I have been asked for) is this—that it turns human endeavour in the direction of substantial help. Scientific pursuits once authorized, scientific habits come to be cultivated. Thus conjecture takes a secondary rank, and facts assume a guiding importance. The thinker acquires confidence and courage in the sources of science; he perceives the predominance of reason, and he learns to trust it throughout. He respects reason while it agrees with theological dogmas, and he respects it equally when it does not. If reason or science comes into collision with Scripture, Scripture has to give way. The Christian makes the Bible the judge of reason; the Secularist makes reason the judge of the Bible, and thus gives reason the preference to faith. This argument does not meddle with theology needlessly. If any hold that there is a Providence of the universe who governs by general laws, then we answer that there are two Providences of which we hear from the pulpits—the Providence of nature, and the Providence of man. But since the Providence of nature acts as Mr. Grant seems to imply, by general and not by special laws, he is practically the God *of* this world, and not God *in* this world.

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The Providence man needs, the Providence the old theologies gave him, was a personal Providence, an available help. Such a Providence is science; there seems to us to be none other. Now what advantage has Secularism over Christianity? The answer is echoed from every corner of life. Who is not weary of the perpetual appeals to the God of Battles in the presence of the defeat of the most righteous causes? How is it that liberty is in chains all over Europe, if God be still interposing in human affairs? If the olden doctrine were true, if our brother's blood still cried to God from the ground, the patriot would be released from the dungeon, and the tyrant would descend from the throne he has polluted; if it were true, Poland would be free to-morrow, Mazzini would rule in Italy, and Napoleon III. would be again in exile.

This is the last speech I have to make to you to-night. I care only to add, that there is hardly any feature in the Christian system which is so seductive as this doctrine of a special Providence. Why do you come and reproach us, and tell us that we are without God in the world, and that we take God away from the world? If Mr. Grant's declaration is right—that what we contend for has been acknowledged all the world over, how is it that you come and say that we make the world desolate? Do you not know that in all your appeals your success depends upon your telling all orders of people that there is One in heaven who cares for them, that every prayer will be answered, that every hair of their heads is numbered, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without their heavenly Father's knowledge, and are not they worth more than many sparrows? Who is there that does not walk in this world trusting in heaven as a dependence, which arms him to meet all casualties? Have we not everywhere the amazing seduction of this doctrine teaching in every part of the land that men's dependence is not upon themselves? If it were not for this belief on the part of the people, you would not have anything like the number that you have now with you. But if this be not true, in the sense I have named, then where are the consolations of your religion? Am I not as free as you in the world, as independent, as able? What help have you as a Christian which I have not also as a Secularist? Can you get any guide and help in the hour of danger which we cannot? If you can, tell us how it is to be done, and we will thank you for the information. But if you cannot do this, if you have no recipe of this nature, if you cannot come and tell us that by special prayer special help, then there ought to be an end of those th which you assail us, there ought to be an end of ons which you heap up against us; you ought no esent us as being the foes of humanity, the enemies

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of our species, and as making war upon the working classes. I say, he is the best friend of the people who tells them honestly the whole truth. I would not stand here the advocate of this doctrine, if I did not feel it to be one of personal self-protection; if it was not with me a matter of calculation how I would live and fare, and how those near and dear to me also shall exist. I once prayed in all the fervency of this same religion. I believed once all these things. I put up prayers to heaven, which I cannot conceive how humanity could have refused to respond to, prayers such as if put up to me I must have responded to. I saw those near and dear to me perishing around me, and I learned the secret I care no longer to conceal, that man's dependence is upon his courage and his industry, and dependence upon heaven there seems to be none.

MR. GRANT:—Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—Mr. Holyoake has not yet explained to us what advantage comes from his view of Science. He speaks of Italy and of those who are trampled upon by physical force. I ask him what help he can give them that we cannot? What can he do for them? What has he done for them? If Secularism brings us no help, it is not worth speaking of. If it brings us help, say what help. It is said that we have no consolation in religion. Does Mr. Holyoake altogether ignore those hopes which some cherish, though he may not believe in them? by which those "light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" It is not the outward that is all a man's consolation. It is what he thinks, whether he is mistaken or not. We have had two cases lately of men possessing great wealth taking away their lives because they feared poverty; so that it is a man's idea, that is his hope and strength, as Christ our Saviour says, "the life of man consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." Take the case of the Madiais in prison, may they not be, do we not know that they are, supported in their inward soul by the consolations of religion? Many of our forefathers have gone through fire, have suffered in jail, and thus have purchased our liberties, because they were supported by looking unto Him that gives unto them the recompense of reward. How many have followed in the footsteps of their Lord, and have felt the yoke easy and light to them because he supported them! Now moral considerations must not be overlooked, otherwise man becomes altogether animal. These however are questions to which we shall call your attention more fully on a subsequent occasion. If Mr. Holyoake would now by his science tell us how to escape these evils; if, instead of praying to prevent persons dying, he

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would keep them alive, then there would be something in it. You oppose Secularism to Christianity, or if you prefer it, your gospel to Christ's gospel. Now you have done nothing for the world, you have given it no science of your own, and yet you speak as if Secular science was something peculiar to you. We ask what in science is yours? What have you done for science that Christianity repudiates, that Christians do not always recognize and help forward? I intended to show, at the conclusion of my previous speech, that you had very little reason to rely upon the spiritual dependence of Mr. Holyoake's opinions, since the definition of his first benefit has varied so considerably. I shall only have time to refer to one version of the *Cabinet of Reason*, which Mr. Holyoake declares to be the "advised and revised" statement of their opinions—there is there quite a different view of Secularism from that which he has given on this platform, for in the *Cabinet of Reason*, we are told that reference to a future life is inimical to present interests, and we are therefore to study this life, not to speculate on the future; to "pass this life boldly without reference to a problematical future after death." But now Mr. Holyoake thinks we may refer to it; he will not exclude it. "There may be another light which others may walk by." They are coming round to us, and will find us in the safe old place where they left us. "Meditations on the bliss of Heaven," the Secular Cabinet assures us, "will leave little sympathy for earthly purposes, and we shall have nought but malignity in our hearts towards those who look with indifference on our doctrine." The writer therefore proposes "Atheism as devotion to the duties of humanity," which Mr. Holyoake has re-revised and abandoned, at least in name. The same writer gives this definition of "Secularist—signifying our believing that man's *whole* duty and service ought to be centred in humanity and in this life." (See *Cabinet of Reason*, vol. i. p. 120-2). What confidence, then, can we have in the boasted reason of men, who go through so many developments? Are we to follow them? In what? Their belief two years ago? Three months ago? One month ago? They complain that we quote so much of their writings. The fact is they have written so much that tells against them, that what they have written is of very little value, for now they write to say that they do not recognize it, and will not stand by it. Shall we believe in them all? Do they believe in one another? Do two agree? Does one agree with himself six months? Mr. Holyoake asked me if I would meet Mr. Southwell. Why Mr. Southwell and himself are at loggerheads. Here, then, is a safe basis for your spiritual dependence, namely, in those opinions which may properly be illustrated as "Dissolving Views." I hope you will not be mis-

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taken by the reference which Mr. Holyoake made to the statement of the question. Is he so inexperienced in debate that he could so easily be deceived into readily accepting a proposition without saying a word against it, and saying indeed, that it was "a useful one," accepting it willingly? Is he so easily imposed upon as this? He states that he is not responsible for writers in the *Reasoner:* he should have said that I quoted himself for those main things on which I laid stress. He asks if I would be made responsible for things done on the Continent? Does he imagine I have as much power over the Continent as he has over the *Reasoner?* The present attempt of Infidelity is a healthful acknowledgment of past incompetence: this trying again is a proof that they never succeeded before, and this is all the ground for believing that they ever will, namely, that they never have. Hitherto, they attacked theology, now they affirm science, though I think it will be found that science was in existence before them. They enter into other men's labours, and by these labours deprecate other men's principles. This is our satisfaction, that the Infidels are beginning to disown the names they called themselves, and have so far conceded for this discussion as to abandon all previous attacks on Christianity. They have unsettled nothing, but have become unsettled on their former grounds, and now come to affirm what nobody ever questioned, as the positive side of what they now retire from. They have tried to prove there is no God, no soul, and no future life; this has failed, and now they say positively that there is this life and a body, and that we want something to eat—that we must not have absolute spiritual dependence. Surely this must have been a great invention and discovery on their part. Of course Christianity never recognized any such thing as this—that we required any of these earthly advantages; eating and the necessaries of life it passes by; it recognizes none of these wants and none of the joys of life!

It is true the first miracle of the Saviour was changing water into wine at a marriage feast, but this, according to the *Cabinet of Reason*, which Mr. Holyoake says is not coarse, was "the wine and water trick," though Evans Bell is mistaken in saying that "according to the master of the house (John ii. 10,) the guests had already well drunk," for the master of the house said nothing about it, and the Ruler of the feast said nothing of the kind. It is as accurate an assertion as one on the preceding page, blundering over the history in the Gospel, and insulting Gospel readers by describing the Holy Ghost as "the flight of an Ornithological incarnation." These precious comments are not only printed in the *Reasoner;* but reprinted as a *Reasoner* tract, and the whole collected as a Cabinet of Reason: it is a cabinet of

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perversion and misrepresentation. The writer in his short comment on the marriage at Cana, observes, "It does not appear a very dignified feat, and as, according to the master of the house, the guests had well drunk, it was not well calculated to advance the cause of temperance and morality," and that "no glosses can divest it of its strong resemblance to juggling at a jovial party." "We question not the truthfulness of prophets and apostles." Do you not indeed! What will be said of yours, when in a book Mr. Holyoake endorses, the Redeemer is charged with favouring intemperance and practising jugglery? Sometimes Christianity is too spiritual; then again it is too carnal. John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say, He hath a devil: the Son of man came as no ascetic, to establish no monastic orders, Mary, his mother, patronized brides and not nuns, and her blessed Son, our adorable Lord, wept at the grave of one friend, rejoiced and gave the sanctity of his benediction at the marriage of another, to travel in sympathy through all the avenues of human experience—the Son of man came eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine bibber, the friend of publicans and sinners; and now as of old, we are like to children sitting in the market-place, no mood will please the captious; if we mourn, you will not lament, but exclaim against sour-visaged piety; if we pipe ye will not dance, but withdraw in moral indignation from "a jovial party." But wisdom is justified of all her children, and they who will learn, are sure to know the real character and claims of Divine wisdom, adapted to the joys and sorrows of human life. But we must not trust our reason in these matters, for the *Reasoner* teaches us in the eighth volume, that the Bible helped Rush, and the Mannings, to murder their victims, which was clearly not done by a spiritual dependence, though in twisting passages of Scripture, such as "vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith Jehovah," into meaning, vengeance is ours, we will smite—the sceptics have outraged reason, and murdered common sense.—See *Reasoner*, vol. viii. pp. 72, 73; and *The Bible and the People*, vol. i. pp. 125—8, "the Infidels, Candour and Scriptural Knowledge,"—an article the *Reasoner* has not answered, and cannot answer; nor have any of its writers answered one argument contained in that publication, though a lady has just tried to prove indirectly, in reply, that Christianity sanctions persecution; by which, if she succeeds, she disproves Mr. Holyoake's position, that it teaches "spiritual dependence," since persecution is physical. The inconsistency of their contradictory charges is consistent with the whole current of Secular literature. When there are persecutions, Christianity is physical force; when the Secular substitution is advocated, Christianity is spiritual de-

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pendence. When Christians condemn certain forms of pleasure, religion is ascetic; when Christ shares in the harmless joys of life, he juggles at a jovial party; for "we do not question the truthfulness of prophets and apostles," but of Him whom they adore. When Christians advocate the importance of man's permanent welfare, they are charged with obstructing present happiness; when the Bishops and others unite to form a "Training Institution for nurses for hospitals, and families of the poor," they are called in the *Reasoner* "Christian Mrs. Gamps." (*Reasoner*, vol. v. p. 401,) and an article leads off a *Reasoner*, in which Christian teachers are condemned for preferring Christian nurses and attendants on the dying. This preference is called the expression of "an obsolete arrogant Christianity." "The Bishop" (of London), says Mr. Holyoake, "proceeded to say that the nurses must have a care for the *soul* as well as the *body*," on which he asks "What is known of the soul?" and then asserts that he does not know all about the body, but tries to draw a distinction between the certainty of medicine and theology; enquiring whether the Christian nurses can answer Strauss. Now they do not care about Strauss. One Infidel will answer another; though the Infidel nurse cannot answer the homœopathist, or allopathist, or neurologist, or mesmerist, or hydropathist, or herbalist, or vegetarian, or omnivorous sectarian; or any other of the numberless forms of heresy, or orthodoxy, in your certain and sure science of the body. Why should so much contempt be thrown upon the innumerable Christian charities which care for the bodies of men, because Christians are consistent, and care for the soul as well? Is not this, whether well or ill-founded, the highest benevolence on their part, to attend to what they think of the highest moment? Why should Mr. Holyoake charge them with "afflicting the soul as they attend upon the body," with "persecuting the dying patient with dogmas," when they try to afford consolation, and do kindly what they think for the patient's welfare in time and eternity? Do the Secularists not often complain that Christian people trouble them in their last hours, with Gospel hopes; do they not therefore professedly wish to have their own sentiments for a dying pillow? And if the Christian seeks to establish institutions in which the Gospel may be a better hope, why should they be abused as "creating an order of Protestant Sairey Gamps?" Is not this insolence and abuse? And if the deniers and ignorers of God and eternity are so careful on this point, and if, as Mr. Holyoake says, in enlarged faith, there are some hundred thousand of them, why do they not, instead of bringing barren propositions, for once imitate the real benevolence of Christians, and establish a hospital of their own, from which reli-

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gion shall be excluded? Then they would see how the poor and wretched would flock to them, to die the death of helplessness, whilst an adjoining hospital should have this motto—"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

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THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 3RD, 1853.

THE REV. J. H. HINTON:—In the absence of Mr. Morley, I introduce to the meeting, as Mr. Grant's Chairman, Mr. Charles Reed.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—During the last night's discussion, Mr. Grant produced passages from our periodicals which he deemed censurable. If it was worth my while to answer him in the same way, it would be easy to do so. The Rev. George Gilfillan has just published in *Hogg's Instructor*, No. 413, apparently with a view to help Mr. Grant, this paragraph, which I will read to you:—"Mr. G. J. Holyoake has lately obtained considerable reputation as a lecturer in favour of Atheism. He seems to us, however, a rather silly personage, and by no means such a straightforward man as his friends pretend. If he choose to deny this, we happen to have one fact at his service. He some time ago deliberately struck off a fragment from a sentence in our 'First Gallery,' and by so doing made it blasphemy. Speaking of Homer, and his management of mythical machinery, we referred to Diomede wounding Mars; and after asking what did it prove? replied ironically, as any child might see, 'It proves, first, that spirit is matter, and secondly, that it is very easy to take the conceit out of a God.' Mr. Holyoake, omitting all notice of the context, quotes us as saying, 'Spirit is matter, and it is very easy to take the conceit out of a God.' It was a gross fraud, and we would, as Dr. Johnson did in reference to a similar character, advise all who entertain such a man to dinner, after he is gone, to count their spoons. Brewin Grant, however, is now on his trail, ready to discomfit and expose him at every point. What poor creatures our modern Infidels must be, to put their confidence in a man as destitute of common fairness as he is of religion, decency, and sense!" We are sorry Mr. Gilfillan thinks so ill of us as this passage implies, for he is a Minister with whose good word we should, for many reasons, have

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been pleased; and had he sent the briefest line to us saying that we had done him any injustice, we should have made him the best reparation in our power long ago. In No. 77 of the *Reasoner*, under the department of "Editor's Box," I made use of an extract from the letter of a correspondent, in these words:—"We are sometimes accused of too great freedom with celestialities, yet we have seldom exceeded the following from the pen of the Rev. G. Gilfillan, 'Spirit is matter, and it is no difficult thing to take the conceit out of a God.'" These are all the words upon which the above harsh passage from *Hogg* is founded. I made no charge against Mr. Gilfillan as using this language in reference to the Bible God; I perverted no quotation; I never saw the passage in "the First Gallery," and therefore did not "deliberately strike off" any "fragment." I found no more in the letter of my correspondent than I quoted, and I understood it to relate to mythology, and to be ironical, and believed both facts to be evident in the words which I printed. No one who knew Mr. Gilfillan—and I carefully mentioned his name—could for a moment suspect him of saying "spirit is matter," in any serious way; no one who read the phrase, "take the conceit out of *a* God," could mistake the Pagan allusion, seeing that "*a* God" is never employed when speaking of the Christian God. Any child might see this as well in what I quoted as in the passage Mr. Gilfillan gives. I know, from private sources, that Mr. Gilfillan has for a long time taken objection to this quotation, and I have put the question to various persons disagreeing with me, and I have found that they all understand the passage as I did; all regarded it as a specimen of Pagan blasphemy by a Christian minister. Now, I still think that passage bears the construction I put upon it. It is flippant and profane irony, which would never be forgiven in us, if we used it towards the Christian Trinitarian Deities, whom we no more recognize than Mr. Gilfillan does the pagan Gods. This is the entire history of the "gross fraud," which Mr. Gilfillan denounces. St. Paul says, "Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath:" we are afraid that Mr. Gilfillan somewhat disregards St. Paul, for it is so long ago as five years since we made that transient allusion, which Mr. Gilfillan has treasured up in his wrath until now. Now, if we were to apply to Mr. Brewin Grant such a remark from Dr. Johnson as Mr. Gilfillan applies to us, what would be said? Surely no man makes so many bad puns as Mr. Grant; and Dr. Johnson has said, that the man who would make a pun would pick a pocket. [Interruption]. If, then, I was going to add, the blunt old lexicographer should step into this Hall while Mr. Grant was speaking, he would not stop to count his spoons, but would call in a policeman at once. [Interruption.]

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"What poor creatures"—[Interruption]. I shall have done in a moment.

MR. REED:—I must request that all our friends present will give Mr. Holyoake a calm and patient hearing.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—"What poor creatures," says Mr. Gilfillan, "our modern Infidels must be, to put their confidence in a man as destitute of common fairness as he is of religion, decency, and sense!" This is not so serious as at first sight it seems, for there never was a man in whom Freethinkers put confidence, of whom some priest has not said the same thing.

In this debate Mr. Grant seems to rely upon producing passages from our publications, which he considers to contradict our principles. Now, most of these cases could be answered as plainly as the one I have given you from Mr. Gilfillan; but I trust that we have met here for a better purpose than to reciprocate accusations of this kind. In "The Bible and the People," of which here is a parcel, and of which only twenty-four issues have been made to the public, there are, I believe, more offences against Christian charity and literary etiquette than Mr. Grant can find in the 350 issues of the *Reasoner*. I have marked many of the passages, but I will not read one of them. ["Oh! Oh!"] I will not stoop to such a worn-out expedient. It might give me the triumph of the hour; but what would the serious part of this audience think? What would the newspapers think, when they came to review this debate, if they found that we have only exhibited the spectacle of disparaging each other, while we profess to be standing here contending for the truth? My only motive for referring to the case, is to show you how easy it would be to answer in the same way, if it was worth while. Now, let not Mr. Grant construe this into a complaint that he reads from our writings. He may read what he pleases. When I say that the terms "Infidel" and "Atheist" misrepresent us, let him not construe that into an endeavour to conceal our real opinions. We dissent from you; we have no wish to conceal that dissent, else why do I appear here to justify it? But we do object to be called for ever by names which associate together guiltiness and dissent; whereas our dissent from you is as innocent, and as honest, and as straightforward as your dissent from us. When lately tracing the injury done to us in this land of professed religious equality, by the refusal of our oaths in a court of law, I said that many of our friends were deterred from standing upon our side, because it involved not only themselves in a sacrifice, but also their relatives, dependents, and employers, whom no

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man has a right to sacrifice without their consent. Mr. Grant made this an occasion to impute to us want of courage to stand by our opinions—an imputation I shall not even retort, though that were easy; I shall not even answer it. Richard Carlile answered it by his nine years' imprisonment; Henry Hetherington answered it in the same way; my friend, Mr. James Watson, answered it in the same way; Mr. Southwell answered it before Sir Charles Wetherell; I answered it before Mr. Justice Erskine; Mrs. Adams answered it in Cheltenham; Mrs. Martin answered it in Arbroath, and others of us have answered it in the same way, and we shall again, if need be—if any one shall require it of us.

We were told of the phases of our opinions; but we hold those new phases to be transitions and improvements. Has Christianity no new phases? Has it made no new progress? Then so much the worse for a system, which has stood still while all the world has been moving onwards. You have heard pointed out discrepancies in our statements: but are there no discrepancies of opinion among Christians? Are there no discrepancies in the Holy Scriptures? If the Holy Spirit, conceiving its divine message to mankind in the eternal repose of ages, having all the periods of the world's existence to choose from, and all the generations of mankind from which to select its penmen—if that Holy Spirit ended by delivering to the people a book of so doubtful an interpretation, that the whole race of priests have been disputing about it ever since, may not we be excused some discrepancies, seeing under what disadvantages we have written? Finite as we were, we were persecuted, writing our hasty papers half in gaol and half out—printing sometimes three hundred miles from the place where they were written, and our hurried MS. often consigned to the care of strangers, with no friendly hand to revise a line; smarting under brutalities, chafed by antagonism, crippled by straitened means (often, indeed, by absolute penury), it is no great wonder that we have sometimes been abrupt, and sometimes, perhaps, in the wrong. But he judges us in a harsh and unwholesome spirit, who defends the Scriptures, the work of God, with all their sins of omission and commission, and makes no generous allowance for the difficulties under which we have lived, and written, and struggled.

Out of the books referred to last week, "The Task of the Day" is the only one I will notice; and I will do that, because the author is in a distant part of the world, and unable to answer for himself at this time. That work was begun on the banks of the Ganges, without the young author being aware that there existed a literature of that kind. It was completed in Europe, and the

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publication of it, with the author's name on the title-page, was likely to cost him his rank and his life. When the whole story can be told, it will be found to have been the first book of the kind published under the same circumstances among us. The act was a noble sacrifice to conviction, ranking with those which have been made by the Rev. Messrs. Foxton, Wilson, and Travers. Upon that account, I preferred to leave that work as it came from the author's pen, and I have forwarded to the East the genial strictures of Mr. Langford, of Birmingham, in his new volume on "Religion and Education," as well as those of Mr. Grant, which have appeared in public; and I have no doubt that the author, whose intelligence is striking, as well as his candour, will consider them both, and revise the book, in accordance with what he shall find to have been useful in the suggestions.

The last matter incidental to this discussion I have to notice, is this. Not once or twice only have you heard derisive allusions to my connection with Mr. Robert Owen, and disparagements of his system; and I was called upon last week to say something thereupon openly. It will be a digression, but, as Mr. Grant has demanded it, I will answer. Mr. Grant's allusions to Socialism have been a feeble copy of the speech of the Bishop of Exeter, in the House of Lords, in 1840. I quote it as rendered by the *Morning Chronicle*, of January 27 of that year. What the worthy bishop suggests of the Marquis of Normanby, may stand for what Mr. Grant suggested of me. The bishop said, according to the *Morning Chronicle* report—

He wished of his task he could be rid:
For he felt a horror, indeed he did,
Yet had seen and heard, with profound disgust,
Their deeds of shame, and their words of lust.
He was able to tell them all, he said,
The nauseous tale, from A to Z.
And he thought the Marquis of Normanby
Might relish the tale, as well as he.
The Socialists were the vilest race
That ever on earth or hell had place.
He would not prejudge them—no, not he;
For his soul overflowed with charity.
Incarnate fiends, he would not condemn;
No, God forbid he should slander them;
Foul swine, their lordships must confess,
He judged them with Christian gentleness.
He hated all show of persecution,
But why weren't they sent to execution?
To hasty censures he objected,—
But was not Lord Normanby suspected?
He never believed a rash report,
But who took Robert Owen to Court?
He would not call Owen a bloody man,
But he wrote in words of blood his plan.

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He would not offend, but would fain be knowing,
If Normanby was not as loose as Owen?
And would ask, nought meaning by the hint,
Did he believe in God? for Owen didn't.

Now, it was represented that Mr. Owen had waged a licentious war on family property and marriage. You have heard me concede the sincerity of the prophets and the apostles, while here stands a minister of the Gospel of charity, who appears to believe in no man's sincerity and purity but his own. Can we forget that Mr. Owen, who is thus traduced by the language applied to his system, had grown grey in the service of mankind before Mr. Grant was born? Robert Owen has spent his long and honourable life in the service of the people. He has travelled from clime to clime, from court to court, from town to town, on his noble mission of benevolence. There have been none so high, but he has sought their aid; there have been none so low, but he has stooped to bless them. Where the priest has only given us his barren prayers, and the politician his promises, Mr. Owen has dispensed his gold with a princely hand; he has joined in all schemes of philanthropy, without reference to sect or party; his purse has been open to courts, which have neglected him; to nobles, who have dissented from him; and to the church, which has cursed him. But undeterred by toil, undaunted by danger, unshaken by calumny, even in his old age, when the hearts of other men grow cold and conservative, his heart beats with the generous hope of youth; and he still moves among us with that radiant smile that never wanes, and that kindly voice that never changes. I therefore say, that in this city, where Charles Knight has lately spoken a genial eulogy on him; where Lord Brougham is his friend; where our gentle Queen has a kind word for the aged philanthropist, that no intelligent man will believe the ungenerous aspersions cast upon him; and for myself I will say, I am prouder to have been his humblest servant, than I should have been to occupy the first pulpit in the land. And when the hour of death shall come, can it be true that Mr. Grant will die in peace, and Mr. Owen have cause to fear? Do you dare to call yours the religion of the working classes, and assume that the old man, who, on his death bed, will receive the blessings of the friendless people, will not be accepted of God? And if your Christian tradition is true, and Mr. Owen shall one day stand at the bar of God, do you think it will fare worse then with him, than with Mr. Grant? When Mr. Owen shall report the devotion of his life, his labours of love, the outcasts whom he has saved, the words of kindness which he has spoken, and the deeds of mercy he has done, do you think he will be asked the igno-

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minious question, whether he has believed as Mr. Grant believed? Gentlemen, can you conceive of Mr. Owen being refused admittance to heaven? No, the brave old man will deserve to have a heaven to himself. You ask, what Secularism has done for the people? You have an illustration in the life to which I have alluded—in its labour, its patience, and its love. In this discussion, Mr. Grant appears as the believer, and you consider me the sceptic; yet, in an unfaltering trust in the humanity of any God, before whom we may one day stand; in an unbounded confidence that He will prefer works to words, and benevolence to belief, I have a hundred times the faith Mr. Grant has.

The proposition that falls to me to explain is, that there exists, independently of Scriptural authority, guarantees of Morals in Human Nature, Intelligence, and Utility.

THE UMPIRE.—I only ask you, whether you would like to spend three minutes in entering into that subject, or take three minutes more in your next half hour? You know your subject better than I do, and how far you can get into it in three minutes.

MR. HOLYOAKE chose the alternative mentioned by the Umpire, and gave way to Mr. Grant.

MR. GRANT:—Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Holyoake has spent most of his time in answering the Bishop of Exeter, and the Rev. George Gilfillan. If Mr. Holyoake denies what I say in reference to Mr. Owen's principles, he must not charge me with questioning Mr. Owen's sincerity. I said simply that Mr. Owen's principle led to the destruction of private property and of single families; and every body who has read Robert Owen's *Lectures on Marriage*—and they are printed, and therefore it is no use to deny them—knows well that what I now say is the truth, that upon the question of marriage Mr. Owen presents the lower animals as the most rational beings for our imitation. [Interruption.] Gentlemen, I cannot prove it now because I have not the book here, but I will tell you what I will do [Interruption].

MR. MOORE:—As Mr. Holyoake's Chairman I would most respectfully suggest to this Audience that they should preserve an uninterrupted silence as far as possible. I must say, as Mr. Holyoake's Chairman, that I consider him to have lost at least five minutes of his time during the last half-hour; and hope you will not be so unjust to Mr. Grant as to place him in a similar position. We have met here for the advantages of this discussion, and I

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hope and trust that for all parties' sake it will not be interrupted on either side.

MR. GRANT:—In my first speech the next evening the first sentence shall be one to prove what I have just now said. I will bring the book with me to show to you. Mr. Holyoake, at the last evening, having abandoned the proposition of this debate as too extravagant to be maintained, sought refuge in special providence. I shall, endeavour, therefore, to clear the debate of a few irrelevancies which may divert attention from the main subject, and I shall attempt to define how far we have already advanced and what has to be done. And first let me state, that Mr. Holyoake's idea of discussion appears to be a series of affirmations as to what he believes, not reasons why we should accept them: these reasons being superseded by finding difficulties in what he supposes to be other people's belief. This is the vice of his entire advocacy: it is the dogmatic exposition of his present impressions, which fade away into new developments, until his thirteen volumes of the *Reasoner*, to say nothing of all he abandoned when he commenced that, are like a spiritual thaumatrope. I speak from experience, from reading them in succession from beginning to end with the devotedness of a student for honours. I never speak without book, and never use strong language without strong reasons, which are not refuted by the repetiton of the language in a disjointed way. I may sometimes violate taste, but I always endeavour to do justice, and have not studied a politic politeness to reserve for other occasions the expression of opinions which I repudiate on this platform. I prefer a consistent, honest course, to be the same on all occasions, not employing a general platform for a distinct department of a peculiar politeness, and employing the press for a different style. I do not here speak with "bated breath and whispering humbleness," of the truthfulness of prophets and apostles, and speak in the *Reasoner*, as Mr. Holyoake does of "the trickery of the charlatan Christ" (vol. ii. p. 78). I do not here profess to respect the truthfulness of apostles and prophets, and there charge Paul with craft, and Christ with juggling at a jovial party. I have not been a professional debater for fourteen years, and "am no orator as Brutus is, but as you know me all, a plain blunt man." I hide nothing and fear nothing, but give frank expression to honest opinion, whose truth is not impugned by setting down that frankness for an offence in me which is assumed as a virtue in those which condemn it. I pick not at words and phrases, distorted to look odious, in order to throw odium on others, whilst repudiating what I am doing, and to divert an audience from the argument in which those words and phrases occur; but deal directly with the main arguments and

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leading principles. Mr. Holyoake's theory and practice of debate, as a contrastive statement of personal opinion, instead of a fair collision of reason, appears to me to be a waste of time, and to foster interminable confusion. If he had done as he advised others in his writings, but which he cannot do or has not done in this debate, favoured me with an outline of his main objections and arguments and leading illustrations, there should not have been one point against Christianity left without a fair and direct reply, nor one argument for Secularism without a complete refutation. As it is, I am sastisfied with the argument, and can trust what I have said to the most scrutinising judgment of those who shall read the debate. They will clearly perceive that if in any case "the young minister" overloaded his arguments with epithets, the experienced reasoner would better have served the ends of a fair investigation, by leaving out all notice of these excrescences; and not making a comment on them, a pretext by which to cover himself from the arguments with which they are associated. The rule laid down in my first speech,—that if epithets were used they should not be an excuse for not examining the facts and arguments on which they were founded, appears to be not only useful but requisite. And I may add another, that when epithets are fastened on, the place whence they are fetched should be examined, to see whether they are not improperly distorted to a purpose they were not originally intended for. I shall illustrate this by one term Mr. Holyoake applied to himself in an offensively personal way, that he might excite a prejudice against me by an appeal to my friends, as he did also in his famous *Banner* letter, to inspire the Christian world with a belief of my incompetence for a situation which was a candidate for me, and not I a candidate for it, but for which this discussion must decide my fitness, if it does not do more—remove the necessity for any mission to Secular Infidels, by the mission of this debate, which may settle this question, as I go round with Mr. Holyoake in a contrastive statement of our personal opinions. If Mr. Holyoake had succeeded in detaching my friends from me, he would still have failed in either disproving my arguments or in exhibiting a real generosity, that depends not on niceness of words, but on magnanimity and openness of conduct. He haughtily refused a personal interview, before the debate, and awkwardly in the debate endeavoured to leave the impression that I had some way juggled with the terms which he had signed for this discussion; yet in his refusal of a personal interview, he declared that he left all to his Committee, and then here disparages the proposition which he had signed, and they had adopted. That one circumstance is sufficiently illustrative, and was set quite right by the Chairman, who looked at these matters

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in a straightforward business-like way. I shall illustrate Mr. Holyoake's use of my epithets by the worst he picked up, that we may get clear of these matters and resume the argument, in which I am more interested than in any defence of myself, which I attend to only for the sake of the cause, that it may not be disparaged by the defects of its advocate; for if they do not scruple to asperse the noble apostle Paul, the greatest man that ever lived, and the best, the most generous, self-sacrificing and truthful, —if Mr. Holyoake endorses a book which insults the Saviour,—if he also allows in his *Reasoner* imputations on the personal purity of our blessed Lord—if Mr. Birch, the greatest pecuniary patron of the *Reasoner*, inserts in that organ the vilest insinuations of charlatanry and immorality against the Just One, whom I can scarcely dare to praise, so humbly do I adore him—if Mr. Holyoake declares that he does not reject all the sayings of Jesus, for that he has condescended to insert one or two of them in his grammar —if in his first volume he criticizes a correspondent for uniting in poetry so poor a name as that of Isaiah with Virgil, and the author of the *Purgatory of Suicides*—if whilst professedly avoiding recrimination, he declares that he recriminated on the Rev. John Angell James, by saying that "no sin against the Holy Ghost is equal to that of writing *Anxious Inquirers*"—if he crowned it by declaring that he would accuse that venerable man (whom he professedly respects) before the bar of God, for wronging him by educating him, as he has educated thousands in his Sunday and day-school—if he declares that he would rather be damned than go to heaven with such a man—if he calls the Saviour's teaching "the trickery of the charlatan Christ,"—I need not complain, because for reproving such conduct, the just epithets I employed entitle me to the lowest place on the same list. Amongst the phrases and names Mr. Holyoake selected as an excuse for not attending to my arguments the worst is, that as he declares, I called him the devil; for to this his application amounted, though mine did not. The sentence was of this kind, "not only do they deny the existence of God in the *Reasoner*, but they put the devil in, and Mr. Holyoake proved that it was a correct likeness, for that he had it from 'original sources;' I not having access to original sources cannot say whether his last evasion (meaning Secularism) is his suggestion; but it looks marvellously like one of his transformations into an angel of light." Mr. Holyoake is not in a position to reprove the taste of this retort; it is worse than a rhetorical fault to transform the sentence into calling him a name which he is not called, but of which he should not be ashamed after his article on the devil, and the picture at the head of it, which I have here; whilst my statement that not having access

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to original sources, I could not say whether this Satan suggested the last evasion of infidelity, cannot be complained of by one who calls the devil "our correspondent," and puts in many *Reasoners* (vol. ix.), which I have here, a picture of this correspondent, and the assertion that the devil, Mr. Holyoake's friend, "will answer any of our objections as courteously" as we answer theirs. I hope Mr. Holyoake will favour me with those two portraits to illustrate my speech: he says they are both "accurate," though they are very different, and exhibit the theory of development. If then, Mr. James did call Atheism devilism, did not Mr. Holyoake admit it? And if I said I was not sure whether this acquaintance which he boastfully claims, suggested the latest development, does not Mr. Holyoake claim the devil as his own correspondent? The best thing Mr. Holyoake said the first night, was that noble passage from the *Anxious Inquirer;* the worst thing I said, was Mr. Holyoake's criticism on the author, written as he said "more in sorrow than in contempt," though sorrow would have blotted it out, and contempt would not have written it. The defence of it was somewhat peculiar; for whilst declaring that he "would not reciprocate" my condemnation of writing such invectives in the *Reasoner*, and making such professions in the *Banner*, he adds that these very invectives were a reciprocation of something Mr. James had said about Atheism: though he in the *Banner* declares that Mr. James is "above the arts of harsh invective," with which in this discussion he has charged him, and for which, in the *Reasoner* he had insulted him, by refuting his argument against Atheism through the side of his Sunday-school and pulpit, which Mr. Holyoake has to arraign before the bar of God, as a specimen of his permanent "respect for a minister and an aged one." But whilst he finds in Mr. James's observations on Atheism, a justification of the irrelevant abuse of the Sabbath-school, he sees no justification of my remarks, in his own analysis of "the Young Minister's" motives, at which he arrived by the aid of clairvoyance, and which he published as a specimen of magnanimous courtesy. I still do not see the consistency between the courteous professions in the *Banner*, and the fierce invectives in the *Reasoner*, but will retract my observations when they are proved to be misapplied. Mr. Holyoake has employed his *Reasoner* to justify his conduct towards Mr. James. He expects his readers to think I object to courtesy; whereas I objected to wearing two faces—insulting him in one organ and praising him in another, in order by contrast to insult some one else, which is the only reason why he eulogizes any minister, to make the praise of one invidious towards all others. He would represent me as blaming his friends for praising the courtesy of a periodical, when I only

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wished they would practise what they praise, which they never do—and he will not put this answer in his *Reasoner*. From this method then of diverting attention from the argument to epithets distorted from their connexion, finding in the severity of a conclusion an excuse for not examining the premises; repudiating imputations and making an odious use of terms figurative or literal with indiscriminate perversion, to convey the odium that is rhetorically disavowed; we may with safety return to the questions before us, and the position we have arrived at. A few important points have been decidedly gained on our side; first, that whereas formerly Mr. Holyoake used to boast in stereotyped expressions of "meeting the clergy on fair terms if they like, and on unequal terms if they prefer," no such language is ventured upon now; and not only are special privileges withheld, but even fair demands are not answered.

In *Reasoner*, vol. ii. pp. 68, 69, Mr. Holyoake makes offers and concessions which have been quoted and requoted by himself in pamphlets, speeches and books, as in page 22 of *Why do the Clergy avoid Discussion?* (a book he will have to suppress), he urges the same condescending generosity on his pupil debaters, which he now cannot afford to exemplify. He boasts of being willing to "match his views unequally," with ours; we may speak first and last, he is "content with a small portion of time in debate:" he waited on his reverend opponents and said he should "obviate the objection" that in discussions "disputants tried to surprise, outwit, and take advantage;" and he adds, therefore, "I will explain to you the course I intend to pursue, the books I shall quote, the authorities I shall cite, the propositions I shall endeavour to prove, and the concessions I shall demand; I will do this without expecting the same at your hands. You will now not be taken by surprise: you are pre-warned, and pre-armed; you have three or four days to prepare, and if the truth is in you it ought to come out." (pp. 68, 69, vol. ii.) This is brave chivalry in profession, but he has again "recast the code of controversial tactics," for now he does nothing of the kind, but even withdraws from, and boggles over, the few terms he signed, and can afford me no outline of his course of argument, but takes a new line and leaves the old proposition. If he is so confident let him for the next three nights acquaint me beforehand with the outline of his course, the books and authorities he will cite, the propositions he will prove; let me be pre-armed, or let him confess that he is now less confident; and whilst commencing with disparagement, declaring he has "no objection, if this is the sort of opposition his views are to meet with," let him add honestly that he does not any longer trust to an open war-

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fare but to masked batteries, and the courage that prefers a bush covert to a plain field. Not only are these privileges withdrawn which presumed on our weakness, but the tone of Secular boasts about discussion has altered since the commencement of our correspondence. At that time and for a few weeks after, Mr. Holyoake was lecturing on Why do the clergy avoid discussion? it was customary to send notices to ministers and placard that they were invited: they were often taunted with allowing the unanswered word; the motto of Secularism was "Opposition is our opportunity;" now they plead for "a discretionary silence."

In vol. viii. p. 39, Mr. Holyoake boasts, "We *shall* trouble Zion yet. Many friends are preparing to deliver a *Reasoner* every Sunday morning at the residence of every minister of every denomination: this will induce a general discussion." In vol. ii. p. 286, he declares, "*The evil hour of the saints has come.* I am in a position to force an Atheistic controversy from one end of the land to another, and I will force it. The opportunity of an age is thrown into our hands." The age was short, for now he complains that the Townley Report is called "*Atheistic* Discussion." When some one charged him with "impatience" in "forcing" an Atheistic discussion, which is now altered for Non-theistic discretion, Mr. Holyoake replied, "Of impatience I feel none save that of getting into so charming a contest with the saints; nor of excitement save that of intense satisfaction at seeing the dear creatures throw themselves into our arms with such simplicity." (vol. v. p. 304.) So far was this method carried that Mr. Holyoake got his papers thrust on people and then commented on their rudeness. He met me in the aisle near the pulpit about four years ago one Sabbath morning in Highbury Chapel, Birmingham, and offered me some *Reasoners* to be answered that evening. This led to the insertion of my name in the *Reasoner*, where he keeps a gallery of ministerial portraits done to his satisfaction and to their disparagement. He utterly misrepresented my arrangements, having altered them to answer them, which is his special province, and proves his special providence. In this notice of me he says, (vol. v. p. 321,) "Resisting all invitations to take a seat in the body of the chapel I proceeded to the extreme end of the gallery, where I could see down into the pulpit and observe whatever its reverend occupant might enact." He appears to think the "reverend occupant," was going to "enact" a dance over cross swords, and he was umpire to see whether my feet touched the weapons, instead of attending to my head and digesting my arguments. Because I pointed out his misquotation of Scripture he nullifies it by saying, that I added "other furious particulars" which he "would not recount, as my cooler judgment would have

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avoided them." It was his cool judgment that avoided recording them, while he declares that for "three quarters of an hour by the clock did he watch my movements;" and because having read the *Reasoner* I dropped it within the pulpit that it might not be staring on the side and take peoples' attention from my discourse, as Mr. Holyoake draws away attention by stringing epithets like beads to amuse children and divert men from arguments, he perpetrated this piece of respectful criticism—"The wretch! I quietly exclaimed, is he going to trample it under his sacred feet?" and though he afterwards found out that "the wretch" neither did nor intended anything of the sort, he sends this polite criticism into the *Reasoner*, lest those who want him to be "rancorous" should think him "tame;" and tacked on the observation, "Brewin Grant is going to turn *Bruin* Grant, I thought," thus spelling my name wrong to make a poor joke, and afterwards saying, that I make more puns, and bad ones, than any man; he should say, "Except Mr. Holyoake." He puts the wrong spelling in italics, to meet the apprehensions of his readers, who have been treated to several small witticisms of the same kind; as, "Barker *barks*" (vol. iii. p. 414), Hives is either bees or stings, and, on two occasions, "Knight is benighted;" as, after all this, Mr. Holyoake thinks we are, or he would not venture either to complain of just epithets in discussion, when he uses insolent and unjust ones out of discussion, nor venture to declare in this meeting, that he was not to be dragged into debate with every clergymen, when he tried by obtrusiveness and opprobrium to drag every clergyman into debate, and began to cry quarter when he found one not to his mind. I should not have met him, if his friends had not invited me; for, though I am always ready, I am never in a hurry; but now I have come, his friends must not complain if I am as free in my criticism here, as he has been elsewhere; for I do not wish his saying of Mr. Barker to be true of me, "He shows two or three faces over the country;" nor am I anxious to receive from Mr. Holyoake the degree of "evangelical driveller," with which he dubs those who employ the softness of speech which he recommends to me, and employs here himself, resuming for his select medium what he would not venture upon before this audience. This second point then is securely gained, in connexion with this discussion, that, whereas Mr. Holyoake commenced with me in my chapel, and all over the country openly defied the clergy, and lectured on their avoiding discussion, till his correspondence with me, I have now silenced that cry; and they have set up another, changed the boast of "opposition their opportunity" into silence their safety; and for the policy of forsaking debate, they have

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retired into the fastness of "discretionary silence;" whilst, thirdly, every principle and every name held in connexion with the *Reasoner*, as a positive denial of God, or Christianity, or another life, up to the time of settling the proposition of this debate, is retired from and abandoned; for Secularists now only profess what nobody ever denied, namely, the importance of this life and science, which they illogically call the "positive side" of those negations which Mr. Holyoake refused to recognize in this discussion. His commencing repudiation of the *Reasoner* was intimated in the fact, that he wished me to confine my reference to two years; and then wrote by the next post to declare, that he did not mean what he said. Now, if he has been safe only two years, may he not find, at the end of two more years, that his followers had better imitate those who, in the Acts, burned their "curious books" at the approach of the Gospel?

The rapidity with which Mr. Holyoake has abandoned or disavowed Atheism can be likened only to the rapidity with which he adopted it. It is true, he says (vol. iv. p. 323), "I take pride in the *Reasoner*; it is my favourite means of usefulness." It is true that a correspondent writes (vol. ii. p. 359): "I am proud that the Atheists have such an honourable and uncompromising organ." It is true that Mr. Chilton, claiming copartnership in the advocacy of Atheism, declares (vol. ix. p. 201), that an inquirer "is coming it strong," in asking for a definition of Atheism; and that, in asking the reasons for Atheism, he was "coming it stronger," since he says, "It is rather too much, after some ten volumes or more, devoted to the advocacy of Atheism, with which you and I (Holyoake and Chilton) have been connected, to be asked to give a reason for the faith;" he will not encourage the inquirer's 'indolence;' if he is "really anxious to learn what reasons Atheists have, behold they are abundantly manifested in the book of the *Reasoner*." But, behold, are not there ten volumes forsaken, and the old light now extinguished, as our best hope that these men can guide us for the future? When a little while ago the *Banner* called Mr. Holyoake a "Deist;" he replied, that "Atheist" was the proper name; and when Mr. James, accepting this, called him "Atheist" in the *Banner*, Mr. Holyoake complained of the injustice. Fourthly. They abandon the proposition they modified and signed and agreed to debate; for the proposition which Mr. Holyoake in our printed correspondence calls "useful," he here calls my "extravagance," because he perceives it is too extravagant to be maintained; so that, on second thoughts, Mr. Holyoake—who is so inexperienced a debater—finds that "the young minister" has entrapped him into a proposition, which now he will neither propose, second, nor

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suppest. Have we not then some ground for hopefulness, since they no longer offer special advantages, nor seek discussion, but complain of being dragged into it themselves; and when they do come, they repudiate all that they have said and done before, and next proceed to repudiate the proposition which they accepted, modified, signed and printed, which they heard read in this open meeting, and did not find out its absurdity till the time came when they should prove it. I shall in my next speech make some observations on the question of science, providence, and prayer. It is enough here to state, on this subject, that Mr. Holyoake should have intimated, that he meant chiefly to discuss the doctrine of special material Providence, which is very subordinate in Christianity, and which was caricatured, and not stated, by Mr. Holyoake, in his account of the subject, and which forms no part of our agreed statement.

Now I will give him a test. First, let him state some passages of the New Testament which recommend the special providence he speaks of; and secondly, let him show, by any reasonable criticism, that the passengers in the *Amazon* had the promise of Christ that they should not be drowned, and that they ventured on this "absolute spiritual dependence." Till he does this, he argues against his special notion of providence, not against the teaching of Christianity. And when he has done this, which he cannot do, and perhaps will not try, let him next show what he would have done if he had been there. I am not sure that he would not have prayed, but I am sure that if he had prayed his prayer would not have been his "material destruction." I do not see how praying could drown those people. I am not now saying what prayer would have done, what it did for those who prayed, but I want Mr. Holyoake to understand that it is the most preposterous imagination in the world to conceive that spiritual dependence or prayer either set the ship on fire or drowned the passengers, and, therefore, it did not lead to material destruction, and that it never did, and never will, any more than his Secularism ever did or ever will lead to material salvation. If he fails to justify the introduction of a topic which I had not set down nor defined in our preliminary correspondence, if he makes the most of what he forgot to inquire my views upon, he is leaving the debate for an irrelevance. I am not afraid to discuss the Christian doctrine of providence, but I cannot take that for my case which Mr. Holyoake has carried round in his carpet-bag to amuse his friends and astonish discerning critics. I am not committed to Mr. Holyoake's perversions of Christianity, but stand by Christianity itself. I believe there is great truth in special, and the greatest truth in general providence, but the greatest untruth in Mr. Holyoake's description of either; nor can

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there be a further departure from the fairness of controversy, than to manufacture your opponent's case. Mr. Holyoake lays down the rule for his assistant debaters, that if they cannot afford to state the case of Christians as forcibly as they would state it themselves, they are not fit to debate. It amounts to a complete disqualification of Mr. Holyoake to discuss with me on providence, since he has not sought nor received my opinions on the matter, but made a man of straw to light it from the fire of the *Amazon*, which neither Mr. Holyoake's proposition nor his science could have put out if he had been there. If Mr. Holyoake, therefore, will tell us what my views of providence are, and then show how they will apply; if he will show when I told him I accepted his special mistakes for my special providence; if he will state when and where I arranged to maintain his notions; or if he will prove out of the New Testament that the passengers were justified in expecting to be saved by a miracle, then he may read to you the impassioned folly of Miranda, especially if by his science he can carry out her recommendation, find a place to "sink the sea" into, and for one vessel, destroy a thousand, with all their passengers, as the special miraculous providence of a poor irrelevant Secular proposition. Till he can do all this, he has done nothing but waste our time by attacking principles which are not held by me nor taught in the New Testament, instead of proving the proposition he signed beforehand and come here to disavow and evade. For whatever may be said about "science the providence of man," it will be manifest from this debate, that the special providence and only defence of Secularists is evasion of their own principles and misrepresentation of ours. But if Mr. Holyoake's doctrine of special providence, on which nobody relies, betrays others into material destruction, it will not afford Mr. Holyoake logical safety.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—Those who may have the opportunity of looking into the correspondence which preceded this discussion will find that I answered, over and over again, all the questions which Mr. Grant put to me; and they will find, that I put to him, in my turn, a variety of questions, not by any means so many as his own, which he has never answered down to this hour: and, though I want them specially for the next night's debate, I have had no answer whatever upon the subject; and so far was he from being unprepared, as he has now appeared to represent, that on the first night he told us, that twelve nights would be necessary to go through the matter he had prepared. ("No, no.") Of the proposition I shall say no more, because those who come to read or who remember what I said last evening, and refer to the correspondence, will see how truly I have

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represented that entire case. I have never yet, I believe, met with a single minister who would accept a proposition which I myself drew up; and I have always been under the necessity of taking that which they drew up: and out of the one I accepted from Mr. Grant, I had to omit one word, which he once or twice put in, even after I told him it must be omitted. Mr. Townley, and nearly every person with whom I have debated, know this—that it has been my custom to accept their propositions, and make the best I can of them. But in my explanation in the correspondence, you will find I laid down, that we should make an eclecticism of the New Testament, which is quite incompatible with any proposition to entirely remove it; and not only not now, as it is represented, is it for the first time that I have thus spoken, but if Mr. Grant has read the *Reasoner* half as carefully as he has told us he has, he must know that more than five years ago we laid down distinctly the same course, and proposed to do that, and only that, which I appear here to do in this discussion. However, what I have to do more immediately is, to explain that morals, in our opinion, are independent of Scriptural authority.

In *The Bible and the People*, Mr. Grant has said, that "if man was not responsible to God for his belief, truth and error would be matters of indifference;" and on the occasion when I went to his chapel—not for the purpose of giving him a challenge, which I did not, though that was his representation on the first night—not for the purpose of asking him to reply to my papers, which I did not, but merely put them into his hands because he was lecturing on the same subject; and when a friend of mine, a few nights ago in Blackburn, reminded him that I had been to Birmingham, he treated that person as an impostor for making the declaration, although he seems now so well aware that I did go, and remembers many things which could never have taken place on my part. Well, on that night he said, "If we had not the Bible, not an infidel in the world would see any harm in the murder of his enemies." Now, this I take it to be the case with Christians very generally. They derive morals from the will of God; and they consider, that without the Bible there can hardly be any understanding or practice of morality among men; and four millions of persons in this country are habitually reared under this impression. The first consequence is, that when people are so instructed, and they find Scripture precept conflict with their instruction, their practice falters; and the next is, that they regard as immoral all persons who happen to follow a different rule of life to themselves. Taught that the Bible is the sole book of morals, they are unable to conceive any man to be moral who does not accept it. Whatever be a man's integrity

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of life, the Christian will classify him with the immoral, if he refuses to be called by the Christian name. So strong and so pernicious is this feeling in every orthodox circle, that Mr. George Dawson lately said, that "known vice is tolerated with more complacency than suspected heresy."

First, we think that human nature is itself a guarantee of morality; and we mean by human nature broadly, the sum of those passions and natural qualities manifested by men and women, chiefly before, and often after, artificial treatment and demoralizing circumstances have perverted their spontaneous impulses. You will find that men, like Augustus de Morgan, when writing about the conduct and discipline of the teacher, will remind him that he has found many teachers who are unable to instruct, but hardly any persons who were unable to learn when properly instructed. A lady of my acquaintance, who has had much experience in education, is accustomed to say that she never had a "bad" boy; that she considers bad children are made, not born; that if they are properly placed, and properly tended, and removed from the excitement and irregularities that often obtain in private tuition, it is almost impossible that they shall be what the world terms "bad." Now, as some of my past writings have been referred to, I will quote just this one passage: "We do not say to the young, without qualification, Consult your aptitude, follow your bias. We do not assume human nature as being altogether a guide in that full sense; for in this half-nurtured, half-trained, doubtfully-conditioned state of society, if that language were used, the generous might be excited to noble deeds; but the sordid might lay their vulture-claws on their neighbours, and the immoral and unprincipled might victimize their fellows. What we say is, Follow the honest impulse in those directions which include the welfare of your fellow-men, as well as your own, in matters of example and influence. When man begins with himself, he is not long at a loss for rules to guide him; he finds that he loves truth; it is the first impulse of his nature, and the sun-light of the world, without which society is but the valley of the shadow of death. He loves Justice—it is the sole security in action; and he values Cheerfulness—it is the attribute of innocence and courage; he prizes Fraternity—it knits society together in brotherhood. These judgments, well considered and well accepted, become the natural guides of man, by which he may examine creeds, books, and opinions." With strangers, or foreigners, or enemies, our appeal is to the manhood of man, not to his creed; in the hour of danger, we push aside religion, and invoke the natural sentiments of justice. There are certainly many persons who hardly ever sin. Many men, and more women, have a pas-

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sion for goodness; and to do evil is a violence to their nature. With such orders of persons there is a guarantee of morality. The child honours his father and his mother, and the parent guards the purity and the footsteps of the child; the wife cherishes her honour, the husband respects his pledge, the friend is faithful to his word, and the citizen is true to the state—because love and duty and self-respect and good faith, have intrinsic charms and influences over these actors. The same class of persons appear to have behaved in the same general manner in times before Christianity was known upon the earth; they, doubtless, behave in the same way in countries where Christianity is not now accepted; and we have reason to believe, that they would continue to act in the same way, though Christianity should be cancelled to-morrow. This is a primary branch of natural morality, which we consider to be independent of Scriptural authority.

But there is another order of persons besides those whose well-balanced feelings thus incline them to morality. There is an order less happily constituted, whom error misdirects and conventional interest perverts. These are to be governed by knowledge—with them the appeal is to their intelligence; they require to be put under the dominion of ideas. Those only will be sceptical of this order of results who do not know that Ideas are a dominion, and who do not see what an inexorable empire that of Intelligence is. With what Mr. Grant said the other evening as to the power of ideas I quite coincide, though I differ with him as to their spiritual nature. The man of nature undergoes a new birth when he is admitted into the kingdom of Thought. All your martyrs have been born of notions. Man has suffered every variety of torture and every form of death for an opinion. Neither the ties of blood, nor the seductions of influence, nor the blandishments of rank, nor the menace of the red hand of power, have been sufficient to divert men under the dominion of an idea. These sacrifices are made daily among men in science, art, politics and government; and all independently of religion. To learn how strong and universal is this rule of intelligence we have only to notice the conduct of people around us. The accomplished mechanic cannot look without dislike on bad machinery; an expert builder hates the sight of an ill-contrived house; the musician is enraged at false notes; the critic cannot sit still while a bad actor "rants his hour away;" the true painter will not endure a mediocre picture; the quiet, resolute man of action will not stay in a meeting where loud-mouthed, purposeless bombast roars on the platform. The artist whose sense is cultivated is kingly, imperious, unconquerable. Thus the majestic influence of intelligence rules a million of men now, whom lust, rage and

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rapine would have ruled in a former age; and when morality is studied as a science, and all its dependencies and advantages made familiar to the common understanding, we shall find that virtue, which is now a grave and scarce pretension, will become a genial and a public pursuit. Confucius, in one of those reflections which only the poet-moralist could make, and which finds no parallel in the Jewish Scriptures, exclaims, "Alas I find no one who prefers virtue to personal beauty." What a revelation of the artistic element of virtue is here! In the presence of personal beauty all orders of men are moved; the rustic, no less than the philosopher, feels that "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever." Commanding beauty in man or woman draws all eyes and all hearts unto it, and the gazer could gaze on it for evermore. Not less attractive and imposing would be virtue to the artistic moral sense, were that sense to be properly cultivated. Vice would be as a hideous flaw in statuary, or as a deformity in a picture; error would be feebleness, crime a distortion, a daub in life, a mediocrity so low and contemptible that men would scorn it in their noble pride. Vice, which now holds up its head with a certain kind of bastard grandeur, in the midst of the spiritual littleness of this nation, would come to be regarded as a want of talent, and would be shamed into wholesome affront by a proud derision. We are told that the Bible alone supplies motives for conduct. One would think that people had never heard of human nature. A modern moralist remarks, that "passions are in morals what motion is in physics; they create, preserve and animate. Without them all would be silence and death. Avarice guides man across the desert and the ocean; pride covers the earth with trophies and mausoleums and pyramids; love turns men from their savage rudeness; ambition shakes the very foundations of kingdoms; by the love of glory weak nations swell into magnitude and strength: whatever there is of terrible, whatever there is of beautiful, in human events, all shake the soul to and fro, and are remembered whilst thought and flesh stick together. All these have their origin in the passions. As it is only in storms, when their coming waters are driven up into the air that we can catch sight of the depths of the sea, so it is only in a season of perturbation that we have a glimpse of the real nature of man. It is then only that the might of these irruptions, shaking his frame, dissipates all the feeble coverings of opinion, and rends in pieces the cobweb veil with which fashion hides the feelings of the heart." Thus humanity is an arcanum of motives so vast as to supply the iron impulses of which destiny itself is made.

But allowing that some men and women are good by nature, and that it is possible by the culture of the artistic sense to control

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others usefully, what is to be done with those who are both vicious and dull, whose nature excites to excess, and whose capacity will never expand, so as to correct it? In these instances our appeal is to Utility, to the sense of interest—an appeal which the rudest are prompt to own, and which a philosopher cannot wholly afford to disregard. If any one will not pursue right conduct for its own sake, it is still worth his while to do it for his interest sake; if any one will not live uprightly because of the intellectual beauty and harmony of the thing, we say it is worth his while pursuing it as a matter of calculation. We will show him that no other course will answer. If he replies that vice is a profit, and that craft does succeed in the world, we answer that such successes are overrated, and that he should take into account the many instances in which dishonesty fails, compared with the few successes that sometimes dazzle the good and encourage the bad. Besides, we would add, that the tendency of history and of the time is turning against underhand policy—that a conspiracy of all good men is being entered into to defeat it—an organized opposition is rising up against all craft of whatever name—immorality will no longer be referred to the judgment of a future world, and the detection of an invisible judge—it will be watched here, detected here, tried here, and condemned here. Mr. Joseph Barker, once the Rev. Joseph Barker, and *then* one of our opponents, lately attended a lecture I was delivering in Leeds, when he bore this testimony to the influence of arguments addressed to the understanding over those addressed to the fears of the future. "When a preacher," said he, "I used to denounce damnation against the drunkard with so much force and frequency and earnestness, that had there been any virtue in the fear of hell there would not have remained a drunkard in our circuit; but alas! the reformations were few. At length new modes of temperance advocacy were made known, and as my new opinions weakened my confidence in the old way, I tried a new one. I took diagrams, and pointed out the nature of the human structure to the poor tippler, showed him the near and certain mischief he was doing to himself, from which there was no deliverance if he persisted, from which no prayer could save him; no faith could deliver him; and the result was that twenty were reformed where one was reclaimed before—the appeal to the understanding and to utility was so much more effective than the appeal to coward fear of future consequences."

There is one view of human condition in this world adopted by religious philosophers, as well as divines, which demands notice at our hands, and in this place. The Rev. Sidney Smith, from whom I make this one more quotation, in a passage memorable for its manly vigour and manly plainness, asks—"Have not the soundest divines of both churches always urged the unequal distribution

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of good and evil in the present state as one of the strongest natural arguments for a future state of retribution? Have not they contended, and well and admirably contended, that the supposition of such a state is absolutely needful to our notion of the justice of God —absolutely needful to restore order to that moral confusion which we all observe and deplore in the present world? The honest and orthodox method is to prepare young people for the world as it actually is, to tell them that they will often find *vice perfectly successful*, virtue exposed to a long train of affliction, that they must bear these patiently, and look to another world for rectification." This, indeed, is an ancient and prevalent Christian doctrine, but as false as it is old, and as pernicious as it is universal. We differ from this doctrine widely; we indeed acknowledge the disorder and the anarchy, but we say—the order should be restored here, the confusion should be cleared up in this world, the rectification should take place now. It is not wholesome that it should be left to a future state: it breeds a contentment which makes suffering merit passive, and insolent tyranny triumphant. What! Do you Christians tell us that vice is successful, and virtue does not answer in this world? We say—virtue *ought to* answer, and as far as in our power lies it shall answer; and we believe it can be made to answer; and if you want to know what our faith is, this is it,—We know how small is our power, how great are the odds against us; but we whom the world counts as men of merely speculative opinion hold this positive belief. Vast is the power of believing needful to maintain this principle; but we whom you paint as sceptical hold faith in the possibility of this firmly? and we say, it is a faith worth all the creeds of all the churches; it involves more practical good to mankind than all the barren orthodox articles which now ring so noisily and so uselessly through this doctrine-distracted world. You tell us, after eighteen centuries of interminable Christian preachment, that we shall often find "vice perfectly successful." The more shame for you that it is so. While vice succeeds society is a blunder, government is anarchy, civilization is a criminal connivance. What is religious discipline for, unless it takes care, and can take care, that vice shall *not* succeed? You say we would break down the barriers of virtue, and flood the world with sensuality. We who seek to do what you ought to do, and what with your numbers and your power and your wealth you might do—we who would strive to make even-handed justice ever compel the ingredients of the poisoned chalice to the lips of those who preferred it to others: you tell us that God hates sin, and yet you permit sin to prevail; you tell us that God is too pure to behold iniquity, and yet you let the world be overrun with vice, and every week in your pulpits lament it. Why, your own doctrines discourage virtue and grant impunity to vice—[Interruption].

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Mr. Bunn:—Gentlemen, we are here on our honour. We have all to listen to things perhaps with which we disagree, on one side or the other; but hear everything, and then you will go away understanding.

Mr. Holyoake:—Make salvation to consist in deeds, not in words—in works, not in faith, and the world will begin to improve in that hour. You tell us to fear death when the end of all things to us comes—you who will go down to the grave hugging your impotent doctrine, with the sins of the world upon your souls. If you can die in peace, why should those who plod through weary years, in the face of prejudice, and scorn, and persecution, and religious hatred, to sow the seeds of a nobler life—why should they fear? It is good intent that touches the iron string of courage; it is honest virtue that robs death of its sting. One kind act will give more calmness in the last hour than it is possible to derive from conventional hope and historic piety, an impotent practice and a shrinking faith.

I have given you a brief outline of the reasons why we think that morality may exist independent of religion, and we think it has foundations in human nature, in intelligence, and in utility; and we think it is unconfused by those distracting grounds of moral conduct which are gathered from the Scriptures, and about which so many persons are continually disputing:—and when you say, have not you double motives, and have not you higher inducements because of future traditions? we say we contend that desert is the true ground on which to expect a happy hereafter, and that in this respect we are just as well off as yourselves; for you depend upon faith to give you a future, and we depend upon good works and good intent to give us a good future. So that with respect to time and with respect to eternity we are upon a level; and we think there is an advantage in maintaining that in the very nature of things virtue might be a profession. It began in the infancy of the world; it began before your Scriptures were heard of, and as it could begin to be before the Scriptures began to be, no doubt it had an independent origin. All morality seems to require four things, namely, Aspiration, Explanation, Demonstration and Development. It must be a feeling higher than the multitude, leading us to something greater. Then it wants "explanation," in order to distinctly explain it; then it wants "demonstration," for men want to know not only *what* they shall do, but *why* they should do it, and, lastly, *how* they shall do it. Now, you may find a hundred people who will tell you what to do for one man who can tell you *why* you should do it; and you will find twenty people who will tell you *why* for one who will

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tell you *how* you shall do it. The hardest part of morality is the knowledge of the wisdom whereby the precepts shall be reduced to practice. Now, it seems to us that the Scriptures have only the first element, namely, that of aspiration; but explanation, demonstration and development, these things have been the work and the growth of civilization, of the diffusion of knowledge and the rise of the sciences. These things are the work of this age; and if we are competent to carry it on, and to carry on the hardest part, surely we are competent also to originate it; and the purpose of this argument is to show you, that if we are right in these views, if it be possible to be moral without the Scriptures, then there must be an end to countless imputations against us, that we must be without morality, because we happen to be without your faith, and do not share your opinions. We think that many passages in the Scriptures are excellent, that the aspiration is noble—that there is in the New Testament, as in the Bibles of nations before it, many excellent precepts; but there are others which we are not able to receive. We claim to follow those which are excellent, and to reject those which we think not so; and we do the same on Christian as on Heathen ground, and we go to all religions, making an eclecticism of whatever can guide us or instruct us; and what seems to you, or what is shown to you, as being an abandonment of principle in this respect is no other than the path which we have always taken, and which we ought always to take—to recognize that which is right and proper where we find it, and endeavour to augment it, as we are able. And if you shall come to see that morality has independent grounds, and may be acted upon for reasons like those which I have suggested, then you will see that you will not be any longer competent to declare, that we must be without power of acting uprightly, because we happen to be without the power of thinking as you think.

MR. GRANT:—Mr. Holyoake has been arguing, that morality is independent of Scriptural religion. He does not tell you in what sense he means that morality is independent of religion; he does not tell you in what sense Christianity demands that morality should depend upon it. He seems to say, that there are certain principles in human nature to which morality must appeal, and to suppose that Christianity overlooks those principles. Now, the Gospel is built altogether on the supposition, that there are moral elements in human nature "commending the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Mr. Holyoake and the Secularists deny conscience. It was stated that there was a sense to be educated. We do not object to it; and

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we say, that the Bible is to educate that sense. It was stated that you want "aspiration." He acknowledges that the Bible has that; and he says, that all the rest is so very hard, that a hundred men would give a hundred different opinions upon it; and, therefore, it is independent of Scripture. Well, now, if there are so many different opinions upon the subject, as to the basis of morals, What basis does Mr. Holyoake take up? What ground does he stand upon? He observed that the sense of beauty was very high; and seemed to imagine that the sense of beauty would be very much associated with morals, and by which morality is sufficiently taught, apart from the Bible. In what nation is it so taught? If there is a perfectly moral man, apart from Jesus Christ, who is he? Is it R. Carlile? Let it be remembered, that religion never came to found morality, but to build upon the moral in human nature; but that is not the question. If the question be, Whether human nature is sufficient without Bible teaching, then I will take you to the most cultivated people, to those who had the most perfect sense of beauty, whose artistic principles are the very highest models to which we appeal. I will take an infidel, and he shall give you his account of what would pass for a moral man amongst them; and then you will see for yourselves what "beauty" will do. Hume says: "And I think I have fairly made it appear, that an Athenian man of merit might be such an one as with us would pass for incestuous—a parricide, an assassin, an ungrateful perjured traitor, and something else, too abominable to name; not to mention his rusticity and ill manners. And having lived in this way, his death might be entirely suitable: he might conclude the scene by a desperate act of self-murder, and die with the most absurd blasphemies in his mouth. And, notwithstanding all this, he shall have statues, if not altars, erected to his memory; poems and orations shall be composed in his praise; great sects shall be proud of calling themselves by his name; and the most distant posterity shall blindly continue their admiration, though were such an one to arise among themselves, they would justly regard him with horror and execration" (Hume's Essays, vol. ii. p. 419). This was the result of all the culture of the highest "artistic beauty" of the whole human race till the time of Christ; and now we look "with horror and execration" upon what they admired, because Christ has cultivated the moral sense within us. There are a great many other questions in Mr. Holyoake's speech which I could answer, and which I shall answer afterwards; but I will now refer to one point only. Mr. Holyoake says, that the ancient Christian doctrine is to leave evil for rectification in the next life. It would be well if Mr. Holyoake, instead of talking

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so widely about articles and creeds and Christian doctrine, would quote the Scriptures, which he dare not do, for he cannot quote them properly. I will give you one quotation: "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as the life that is to come." The extraordinary perversions of the Christian doctrine of providence in material things opens up so many sources of refutation and exposure, that my only difficulty is to introduce one-half of what may be said in reply; whilst Mr. Holyoake is so fast a man in the way of progress, that having introduced this diversion from his agreed topics of debate, he cannot wait to hear the answer; because he has so many more unfounded assertions to make on the strength of his misapprehensions.

In reply to the assertion, "spiritual dependence may lead to material destruction," take another truer motto, "material dependence may and often does lead to material destruction." They who depended on the Snig's-end philosophy, found this out in the land scheme; so will all they who read that famous "science the providence of man" announced in "Mr. Watson's list," which Mr. Holyoake refers to, called "the management of small farms." This is, philosophically speaking, dependence on spiritual theories of O'Connor; whilst those who trusted to Harmony Hall and the Queenwood Estate bubble, with which Mr. Holyoake was associated, as an advocate of socialism, found to their cost that material dependence led to ruin; as many a working man was cheated out of his true earnings, by false Secular promises; and though they addressed parliament in a piteous petition, for interference to wind up the harmonious Eden of the English Scadder and Co., the prayer was neither heard nor answered, and they may still pray without material salvation. The community "scrip," like much railway scrip, was "material dependence leading to material destruction." More suffered in the Harmony Amazon, than in the late disaster, which Mr. Holyoake wisely omits in this debate, to attack the providence of God, that we may forget the delusive providence of those men, who have ever mocked the hopes they have raised. Behold it is all recorded in the first volume of the *Reasoner*, where Mr. Holyoake says he does not wonder that many who lost their all, lost confidence in the Secular boat; but that he on principle clings to the sinking ship, which "the very rats had quitted," and urges the building of others, instead of sinking that treacherous sea, with breaking the magic wand of empty promises, on which so many embarked for destruction. I could spend all my time in exposing the "South Sea" bubbles and boasted El Dorados which "the science of puffing so ably illustrated by Mr. Holyoake," has created from the pro-

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vidence of man; whilst the providence of God has created the fields of Australia, and waited patiently disregarding all insults till the discovery of these treasures should meet the wants of the world, and fall in with the growth of science, religion and civilization; to form a combined agency in human advancement. Material dependence on "strikes," the providence of boastful man, in opposition to political economy, which defines the providence of God, has proved the heaviest blow on the poor man's bread-basket; sinking many thousand pounds, embarrassing many honest workmen with permanent debts, reducing them to the starvation point, stopping and scattering abroad trade, the means of living, and leading those who trusted to perhaps honest, but certainly mistaken agitators, to material ruin, and the necessity for begging a passage to a foreign land. Let the working classes in particular sit down and count the cost; let them bear a truth, however unpleasant, and not be duped by men whose present professions are only supported by past failures; and let them consider who are their true advisers, nor be daunted by brave denunciations against "the church" which Mr. Holyoake says curses you, and those spiritual teachers, many of whom have ever proved the truest friends of the poor. (Interruption.)

MR. MOORE :—I must request—it is painful for me to do so—that you will not interrupt Mr. Grant. It is very unjust to him, because it deprives him of valuable time. Of course it will be to the profit of us all if you preserve silence as far as possible.

MR. GRANT :—Who, so far from opposing their material welfare, met in the most influential conference in Manchester, composed of ministers of all denominations, to demand in the name of the Bible, free-trade and cheap food for the poor? Men who visit them in wretchedness, and feel honoured in visiting the sick-bed of the humblest of their brethren, often exposing their own lives in the most contagious diseases, to administer the last consolations, when science fails, and the great impulses of the human heart trample down the little logic of scepticism, and the well-dressed minister mingles his prayers and tears with the poorest and most disconsolate, to that God before whom on earth and in heaven the rich and poor meet together, since he is the Maker and Father of all. I, who have done the least in this way, have on several occasions found it necessary to become fumigated, to take long walks in the fresh breeze, change all my clothes, and take a bath, that I might not carry to those dependent on my labours the seeds of that disease which science could not master, and which the Great Physician in heaven alone could comfort by the oil and wine of his Gospel,

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when all else failed. Many died in the late cholera through visiting the sick; and so far were they from the cowardly and pitiful "self-defence" of avoiding material destruction, that spiritual dependence made them independent of it, as it does every true heroic Christian. Nor is the visitation of the poor confined to spiritual aid, which, after all, is the main possession of men, who live only in their thoughts, feelings, and hopes, and are rich or poor according as they think so; but more material charity is exhibited in this way by city missionaries, ragged-school and Sabbath-school teachers, Scripture readers, curates, incumbents, deacons, elders, ministers, private Christians, and public societies, than in all other forms of charity put together. If the poor are in want they apply to the religious, and especially to ministers; and so far do they, who should know, belie the pretence that we disregard the body because we regard the soul, that they make our religion the ground of their appeal. A minister's house is almost like a relieving officer's, and men ever prefer it to taxed charity and pauper allowance. That minister is a happy exception who has not been straitened in his own means by the incessant claims of the necessitous and the imposing. I speak from experience, knowing that every sick case, every coal-pit accident, every temporary distress, is sent round first to ministers, and next to the leading charitable religious men, of whom you may find a list in every lodging-house and hospital; and that no man five miles round from my door would think of setting up a horse and cart for a small way of greengrocery without expecting a shilling or half-a-crown as my share in setting him up. This I have been obliged to stop to some extent, but it shows what people in distress think of religion. If Mr. Holyoake were to live next door to me, or any minister in a large town, and to put on his door "Atheistic lecturer," or "Secular advocate," the minister need not put the word "reverend," he will be found out, and shall have fifty applications for charity for one that would be made next door; whilst Mr. Holyoake would be lecturing on some new Utopia; a "dependence" on which would call men from the safe road of honest industry, and lead to "material destruction;" and although all the agents of reason, as opposed to religion, have had the wide world before them for ages, they have done nothing for mankind, but charge against religion those evils which it has not yet overtaken, and forgotten the good it has accomplished. Need I enter into the illustration that material dependence may lead to material destruction? Is not every failure in business, every robbery of a savings-bank, where Mr. Holyoake would put your treasure, and by which so many have been materially ruined—is not warfare itself a material dependence, in which one side wins and both sides lose, and thousands are materially destroyed? Have we not acci-

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dents by flood and fire, against which no secular charm of providence of men, though bound up in silk, and tied round the arm, can ever safely defend us? Can Mr. Holyoake find any case of material destruction that has not come from material dependence? While men slept at Holmfirth, depending on embankments and engineers, material safeguards, their defences gave way, and they were materially destroyed; whilst the spiritual principles of religion assembled the minister, and the merchant, to alleviate a calamity from which Mr. Holyoake would not have escaped if he had been there. But so generous are the principles of religion, that one congregation in Birmingham had to transfer its collection to alleviate another calamity, because spiritual principles had already done what was required and possible to mitigate that destruction which came from material dependence.

From this first motto, then, that material dependence may lead to material destruction, we deduce a second, namely, that spiritual dependence does not and cannot lead to material destruction. It is not my belief in providence that sets my house on fire; it is not my prayer for pardon through Christ, and the bread of life for my soul, which lessens the loaf on my table, or deprives me of work and wages. These inevitable evils would come even if I were a sceptic, only I should have no inward sunshine as a perpetual ray of hope to alleviate the treatment of that nature which Mr. Holyoake praises for goodness and wisdom, and then vilifies as the procedure of Divine providence. For why did he not cry out against Nature, which in other cases possesses all attributes, but in that case of the *Amazon* was relieved of all share in the disaster, which was recorded for the dishonour of Almighty God? Nature, says Mr. Holyoake in his *Reasoner*, is self-sustaining, and he will not degrade it into the "non-intelligent tool of God;" yet he charges God with the proceedings of nature, and also says in the *Reasoner* that nature is the God we seek, nature is God, and shall not be God's tool; it is degraded by this; nature is wise, nature is good; yet when nature drowns a crew, God is impotent or cruel; and nature is his God, and yet here he said he would not submit to nature—he would subjugate nature, so it shall not be degraded into the tool of God; it is Mr. Holyoake's God, and shall be exalted into his intelligent tool, and God—the God he denies, shall stand at Mr. Holyoake's bar, and be arraigned for the sins of the God he acknowledges—namely the sins of nature—by which alone we are led into material destruction. If this is not blasphemy it is nonsense. It is not manufactured by me for him, it is in his writings and speeches; but he manufactured for me a special providence as his only safety against my arguments, and he will want equal safety from the question of "morals indepen-

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dent of religion." It is dependence on nature which leads to material destruction, it is dependence on God which warns us against all present calamities and puts our treasure into a savings-bank which cannot be robbed, where "no thief can break through and steal," and leads us to feel happy in the thought that we have a treasure in heaven, which is as true to us as the idea of money in a bank; for the wealthiest man has no more joys than his five senses and his thoughts, and the working man has the same; one thinks of his bank here, another of his bank there; only one knows that there may be panics on earth, and reads the *Times* to see how the consols rise and fall—the other knows that his hopes are not exposed to fluctuations. And this does not dishearten him for hard work, but prepares him for those evils which nature may bring, for he alone is superior to nature, and finds in calamities that which ministers to his moral discipline, as the true Lord of all below, in the image of God to have dominion, whom no fate can conquer, since all things are his, life or death—the one to conquer bravely and extract good out of evil, the other as his master of the ceremonies to lead him up to his throne of glory. It is not his spiritual dependence that kills him; this conquers death and makes him a vassal to the true Christian, as a captive king waiting obsequiously on a lordly conqueror. "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Mr. Holyoake's nature kills us; the gospel of Christ brings us life and immortality. With Secularism death is deadly fate, and comes from material sources; with Christianity death is elevated into the portal of a palace by which we escape from the jaws of a material destruction. All must die; Secularism cannot help them, cannot certainly postpone death. Material destruction is the only gospel they bring us; and yet would cheat the world with a pretence of defending us from it. Their bright gospel is black fate; their spiritual theory is promise; their practical principles are annihilation; their faith is this life; their works are the decomposition and recomposition of matter. They did not give this life; they cannot guide us in it, that we may walk in it uprightly, honestly, clearly; they can only destroy our hope of another, and mock us with a material dependence on materialism, which is the only cause of material destruction. We pray, and people die. Mr. Holyoake prayed, and people died; he does not pray, and still they die, it is therefore a Baconian induction that prayer does not kill them; and, therefore, spiritual dependence does not lead to material destruction. But, if there had been a God, and he felt as Mr. Holyoake, God would have heard; so there is no God, because every prayer is not answered,

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because God is wiser than we are; so there is no wise Nature, no good Nature, for if Nature had been wise and good, it would have prevented all calamity; and, therefore, there is no help anywhere. And this is the "advantage of being undeceived" on a point, which Mr. Holyoake wishes both to leave open and to shut at the same time. If Mr. Holyoake had understood the Christian religion, he would not have prayed absolutely that any might not die; but that, whether living or dying, they might be the Lord's. And this is a great support to those who believe it, which is not lessened by the sneers of those who respect their own faith, but have not sufficient reverence for the consciences of other people. The doctrine of Providence, which Mr. Holyoake has dressed up in a harlequin fashion, to divert us from the proposed subject of this discussion, is too grand to receive justice amongst a thousand other subjects, and too important to be set aside with the exclamations of a weak girl. Want of time alone prevents me from fully investigating such a theme. I shall, however, have said enough to spoil the confidence of Secularism, and must be pardoned for giving hints where I could give long speeches. Nothing would please me more than room for a criticism on that *Philosophy of Shakespere*, from which Mr. Holyoake seems to have borrowed his observations; the most unfair and Jesuitical book in the English language. I may here remind you, that those calamities which come from the course of nature's laws are not set down against nature, but against God, and adduced against Christianity, as if those material evils came from its spiritual principles. The intelligent and candid infidel will not overlook this observation. The doctrines of the Gospel do not make fire burn, and water drown; there were accidents before Christ came, and they continue in spite of Mr. Holyoake's proposition. But a proper view of Providence would show how these evils are turned to account, as calamities lead to science; and so by evil we are trained for enjoyment—by the evils of nature's rod, which in the education of mankind is not laid aside to square with the Secular nursery rhymes. And the same principles are applicable to the evils in society, and to the particular sufferings of each man's lot: they are a moral education, sufferings from which science and human, social and moral improvement are the wonderful results; whilst the interference which Mr. Holyoake required to prove a special Providence, and justify his belief in God, would have destroyed that Providence which preserves the regularity of nature, and without which we could have no material dependence. What he wants would destroy what he recommends. If God interfered constantly, nothing would be certain: and, instead of the regular miracle of nature, we should

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be confused by the irregular miracles of Mr. Holyoake's short-sighted and very special providence. And because God will not throw all things into confusion, Mr. Holyoake denies his existence, and then boasts of trusting those very laws of nature in which God's providence mainly consists. We see Divine goodness in preserving all the ordinances of nature, which the Psalmist sublimely says are his "servants;" whilst the evils that come through the regularity of nature are also beneficial in inducing carefulness, and providentially building up man's future welfare on his past failures, as a child learns to walk by having experienced the danger of falling. I have said before, and repeat with equal confidence, that Christianity teaches no such doctrine of a violation of nature's laws in a special providence; but, on the contrary, expressly condemns the very principles with which Mr. Holyoake is pleased to reproach it. For when our Lord was tempted to cast himself down, as a spiritual dependence in opposition to material laws, the Saviour, who is my standard, forbade such rash presumption, and for ever taught us to avoid all needless danger in that passage which Mr. Holyoake did not quote, but which he ought to have done, if he pretended to talk about Christianity and special Providence. "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Thou shalt not, by foolish presumption, call upon God to relieve thee from a danger sought in madness; whilst no danger is to be avoided in the course of duty. *Then* risk material destruction; be above cowardice; be ever ready to die for the truth. Hold life cheap against conscience and truth; but throw it not away in the folly of Secular providence, which is insanity. Mr. Holyoake has not discussed special providence, but Secular providence, a myth of his own fertile imagination. Let us not, therefore, content ourselves with the weak emotion of Miranda, on which Mr. Holyoake rests his case, to abandon logic for rhetoric, amuse us with poetry and plays, drowning religion in a partial wave from Shakespere's *Tempest*. But let us treat Shakespere better than Birch does (and better than they treat either Christianity or literature), by quoting him fully, and reading on from where Mr. Holyoake wisely concluded. We may then find in the Shakespere they vainly claim (writing a book to prove he is a Secularist, and quoting this unfair book against Providence, instead of quoting Shakespere fully) that they cannot trust the great name which they assume; for they are above great names when we quote them, and are so barren of great names, that they steal Shakespere, and poison literature with atheistic commentaries, and then bind Shakespere, that the whole truth may not come out. The great dramatist could find us more fitting vehicle for work

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emotions than the untutored Miranda, whilst by the mouth of her wise father, he proceeds to condemn this hasty ignorance, which cries out against what it does not understand; and instructs those who are willing to learn, that we are not to look merely at occasional calamities, and judge the Creator partially, blindly consigning to destruction all the sailors and passengers on the sea to save our miserable theory; but to take a wide survey of the issues and general results of Providence, that builds up science and safety on calamity and suffering. Thus does Miranda's father reprove the impassioned exclamation of the bewildered daughter, as a message from the God of nature to mankind:—

> "I have done nothing but in care of thee,
> (Of thee my dear one! thee my daughter) who
> Art ignorant of what thou art."

Mr. Holyoake adopted her "ignorance," and paraded it before us for the foundation of a philosophy which cannot save us from material destruction; by which he proves that he is no safe guide either in poetry or science, and that he can as little be trusted in Shakespere as in Bible quotations. And from the whole we at least may learn the modesty to understand what we find fault with, to know the authors we quote, and the religion we oppose or accept; and laying aside the weak emotions of a theatrical display, look with enlarged thoughts as spectators of the divine works, taking a rational survey of results physical and spiritual, temporal and eternal. Spiritual dependence does not lead to material destruction; it is nature that destroys us; it is material dependence that fails, as all accidents and physical evils prove. And the *Amazon* case is in point. On what did the passengers depend? To whom did they pay their passage money? Did they buy a spiritual berth and tempt the sea in the frail boat of a special theory? Or did they pay to the owner, and trust the stout timber and the hardy sailors? Which dependence, then, destroyed them? Was it not the ship that failed? Did their prayers set it on fire? Has science settled the origin of the fire since? Can Mr. Holyoake tell you how it originated? Could he have prevented it then? Can he again? I can tell you where it did not originate. It did not originate in spiritual dependence. They trusted the ship and the crew, and material dependence led to the destruction of their bodies; whilst their prayers saved their souls and crowned a temporal calamity with eternal happiness. It was the only alleviation in that terrible calamity, before which science was dumb, to come here and

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boast on *terra firma;* whilst the spiritual principles of the gospel, softened the terrors of death on the sea, and administered comfort to the survivors on the shore, and afforded the only help to the bereaved; whilst Secularism finds nothing better to do, than with folded arms to burlesque a special providence, and misrepresent the Christian religion.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—The Free-thinkers of the last generation are the Ministers of this. Many, many a man has been denounced for being a free-thinker for making precisely such a speech against providence as Mr. Grant has made to-night. It has been the boast and the glory of Christians hitherto, that they could introduce us to a knowledge of those divine things wherein by prayer and supplication we could be protected. They said that we made the world desolate, that our heavenly Father was an "ever present help in the time of need." Now Mr. Grant laughs at me for representing that as the Christian doctrine. Why, I have not heard for a long time such a formidable speech as Mr. Grant's against the holiest, against the most consolatory part of the Christian religion. Now he calls upon me to read Scripture, and demands of me on what authority I make the assertion that such is the doctrine of the Scriptures. He told you last week how he would open an hospital, and how he would put over it these words: "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and ye shall find rest unto your souls"—whereas people go to hospitals for rest for their bodies. I will give him a better motto from St. James. In the 5th chapter of St. James, 14—18 verses, you read these words: "Is any sick among you? let him call [not for the physician, but] for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the *prayer of faith shall save the sick,* and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." Now this is a motto which would suit Mr. Grant's hospital much better than the one which he gave last week; but I will venture to say that if Mr. Grant was ill, and there was nothing to be done in that hospital except that which St. James recommends, he would think twice before he went there. And yet if St. James is to be believed, Christianity has no need whatever of

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science either for health or for rain. If it be true, what Christ said with so much emphasis, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that, believing, ye shall receive"—surely if these words may be trusted—if he who uttered them may have credence given to him, they who went to sea in the *Amazon* had a right to expect that they would be protected.

Mr. Grant has said, that I have burlesqued, that I have treated like a harlequin, the doctrines of prayer and providence. I ask, did St. James mistake them? Mr. Grant went further: he said, my views were "perversions of prayer and providence." I ask, did St. James pervert prayer and providence? He went further: he spoke in language that seemed to be reckless, and said I "advocated no different dependence on science than had been acknowledged and followed by Christian, Pagan, and Jew, from the beginning of the world until now." I will not stop to comment on the passage I have read; but I ask the reader of the Old Testament, and the reader of the New, and the humblest student of history, is this true? Why, on the 18th of October last, the Rev. Mr. Grant heard the Rev. Newman Hall deliver an official sermon, in which he said, that the "efficacy of prayer was a fundamental doctrine of Independency." He said, "With us prayer is not a mere decent, comely ceremony, but the actual presentation of petitions to an omnipotent and gracious Prince, who has promised that, in answer to our requests, he will bestow inestimable blessings upon us, and manifest himself to us as he does not unto the world." I demanded to know last week, and I ask again, in what way Christians have an advantage which we have not? and how do they procure it? If men pray, help may not come; but are there not two ways open—one by prayer, and the other by science? When we say, Secularism is the friend of man, remember Mr. Grant has said, in his *Bible and the People*, "If the question be one of science, the Bible does not pretend to touch it." I say that Secularism does pretend to touch it, if it be one of science; and it has confidence in science, and it is in this respect that science is a truer dependence than any other can be. Mrs. Beecher Stowe ends her preface to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by saying, "The great cause of human liberty is in the hands of One, of whom it is said, 'He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor, and him that hath no helper.'" Here is a sentence that has been received by all the kingdom as being the statement of what the Christian religion promises and will do. I ask Mr. Grant three questions—Are not the negro race needy? Do they not cry unto God? Do help and deliverance come? You have the eloquent prayer of Whittier, who says, alluding to this very cause which Mrs. Stowe advocates,—

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"God of all right, how long
Shall priestly robbers at thine altar stand,
Lifting in prayer to thee the bloody hand
And haughty brow of wrong?
Hoarse, horrible, and strong
Rises to heaven that agonizing cry,
Filling the arches of the hollow sky,
How long, O God, how long?"

Now, there are no persons who have not heard such prayers put up by every Christian, in every chapel, in every prayer-meeting in this empire. I have heard them hundreds and thousands of times. I never heard an Evangelical minister deny the doctrine before—I never heard it called in question; but now, when I assert it as a doctrine of Christianity, that men are taught to look for present assistance, you have Mr. Grant laughing in my face for doing so. Therefore I am not wrong in saying, that Science is the Providence of man, since science will bring to us that very help, in ten thousand cases, which Christianity plainly cannot; that science, which Christianity so frequently opposes, and so seldom heartily supports. You have heard to-night reference made to the characters of various persons of old, who, Mr. Grant says, were very bad, although they were very eminent in their day. But look you: if you turn to the ancient Hindoo literature, you will find, in the *Bhagvat Geeta*, which is said to be a book of primordial antiquity, that Arjoon thus speaks:—"Although my enemies would kill me, I wish not to fight them, not even for the dominion of the three regions of the universe, much less for this little earth. Should we destroy them, tyrants as they are, who take refuge with us?" Here there are persons, thousands of years before the date of Christianity, unwilling to murder their enemies on any account, although we have been told that an infidel would see no reason why he should not do it, but for the Gospel. "A man's own religion," says the same writer, "though contrary to, is better than the faith of another, let it be ever so well followed. It is good to die in one's own faith; for another's faith bringeth fear." Can anything be profounder than what I quoted from Confucius, that the actual face of virtue would allure, like human beauty? Is anything purer than the saying of Plato, "It is better to die than to sin; it is better to suffer ruin, than to do wrong?" Is anything more beautiful than the Persian maxim—

"The sandal tree perfumes when riven
The axe that laid it low;
Let man, who hopes to be forgiven,
Forgive and bless his foe?"

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Now, these are sentiments that have originated in the minds of persons of different ages, far removed from Christianity. If, then, they could have originated these sentiments—and they are as beautiful and as profound as anything which you have—I say it is possible that there may be morality, independent of Scriptural authority. Mr. Grant may say that men, in these nations, were bad and debased; that there were many atrocious vices current among them. But do we live in an age when there are no vices current among us? You may have the beauties of your Scriptures, but you have also the immorality of society, which you also deplore. I may say, as Mr. Grant said of various Bible texts—when I quoted some, he quoted others, and said, "Are not these also here?" So I say; there may be heathen immoralities, but are not these sentiments here also? and do they not prove the presence of profound and beautiful feelings, on the part of persons supposed to be incapable of originating any moral doctrines whatever? My argument is, not that you have no morality—that the Bible contains none, but my argument is, have we not some also, although we do not stand upon your side? My argument is a vindication of our right to be considered as virtuous, as moral, and as innocent as yourselves, although we share not your faith. My argument is that, by appealing to utility, and to the artistic sense, we can cultivate and train people; and we would enter upon such a scheme of human government, that vice should be made impossible; that we would have all retribution here, and would make this world as perfect as we were able. We would direct human attention to human conduct and character, and create a confidence in virtue—not disparage virtue, as I think you do, when you say that no sort of works will save us, as the Rev. J. Angell James says, in his *Anxious Inquirer*. He says, works are of no avail; that man can do no good whatever; that "he can perform no good works in the sight of God, unless he also believes." We assert the contrary doctrine; that works in themselves are pure; that they are deserving; and that works will be our salvation, if we need salvation. We do more thus to inaugurate morality and sanction it, and to authorize it, and exalt it, and extend it, than the opposite doctrine, on your part, does. We have had some quotations from plays to-night. I will quote from a prologue by Beaumont and Fletcher:—

> "A man is his own star, and the soul
> That can render an honest and a perfect man
> Command all light, all influence, and all fate,
> Nothing to him falls early or too late.
> Our acts our angels are, if good; if ill,
> Our fatal shadows, that walk by us still."

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Now, that is the doctrine which we continually disseminate. St. Paul seemed to have no notion of that when he said, "If the dead rise not, what advantage is it to me? Let us eat, drink, and be merry; for to-morrow we die." I say, that is the sentiment of the sensualist; it is not the sentiment of a man who is at all conscious that right and wrong are inherent in human nature; that there are wide distinctions between virtue and vice. That is not the sentiment of the man who comprehends, that if we do well, it will be well with us; that if we do harm, the evil influence will follow us; who sees distinctly that "our acts, if good, our angels are;" and "if ill, our fatal shadows that walk by us still." This is the doctrine which, from beginning to end, we urge, and urge thus in our vindication and self-defence. It will be no answer at all to this assertion to tell us, that there are varieties of opinion upon morality; that philosophers themselves are not agreed about it. I have only to say, that that is very true; but are there not also varieties of opinion about your religious doctrines? Are you agreed about them? I do not object to them because of your differences; I object to them only because of their inherent unsoundness. Now, with us, if we propose a course of moral conduct, we are, I think, in this more practical position. If a man endeavours to find out what is right morally, he may find it out by experiment, for the issue can be tested by the experience of this life; but with respect to future-world truths, you must die to find out whether they are right or wrong. Every year there is coming more and more of unanimity as to what is moral; while every year there are growing wider and wider differences of opinion as to what is religious and essential to man's salvation.

Thus we claim a kind of proportion—you will not grant us, I know, that broad acknowledgment to which I think we are entitled, but the plea is, as I have indicated in our correspondence, a moderate one; that if we can show you successfully that morality is independent of religion, that it is a growth, not professing to put forth to you a person or a nation that is perfect, because morality is a growth—it has risen in all nations, as Macaulay has told us, and as Pope has shown in his *Essay on Man;* it is the beginning of all the calculations of men for their own preservation in every state of human association. Morality is growing in every nation; I believe it is increasing in our own nation. I look upon it as a growth of time, as the result of civilization, and of the confluence of a thousand circumstances in the development and progress of the human species. Hence, to ask for a perfect nation, or for a perfect people, is to ask for the end of civilization before we have arrived at it. You may point out innumerable persons on my side, as I could perhaps on yours, not what either of our theories

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would make them, but that is no argument against the possibility of there existing, independent of scriptural authority, grounds of morality in human nature, in intelligence, and utility. If we have this sort of recognition, then there will be an end of the imputation so frequently made against us, that in life we are not to be trusted, or, as the *British Banner* said of Mr. Charles Hannel, (than whom, perhaps, a more accomplished or amiable person did not exist,) when reviewing his book, that "he must have been a dangerous neighbour"—dangerous only because of his difference of opinion concering the theoretical foundations of your faith. Our argument is to this effect therefore—that if you could see that morality may exist independent of Scriptural authority, then we are no more dangerous to our neighbours than you are to your neighbours. Then there can be no reason why you should surround our death-bed with gloom, why you should say we look upon the world with eyes different from your own—because there cannot attach to us guiltiness—there does not attach to us depravity. We are just as good citizens, we are just as good subjects, we are just as good in all the relations of life, peradventure, as yourselves. If we do not walk by your light we walk by our own light. If we have not your reasons for being virtuous, we have, perhaps, our own reasons. If we have not your law, we have a law of our own. That is the nature of the plea we set up, that we can address humanity as well as yourselves. There may be all the difference as to means. Our mode may be less perfect than yours; but surely it is possible, if we appeal to human nature in the sense I have explained, to say that we can guide man, that we can control man, and induce the progress of mankind as well as yourselves.

MR. GRANT:—I am glad Mr. Holyoake has for once commenced what he will find very necessary, if he intends to have a real debate, a collision of opinion. I am glad he has begun to turn round and defend his propositions, instead of continuing on so fast, and departing so far from them. But his representation of my views of providence are as near to the truth, as his representations of the meaning of every passage of Scripture which he has quoted in the whole course of this debate. I did not come here to deny that doctrine of providence, which is held by every intelligent Christian, and by all those who belong to my own denomination; but I came here to deny that doctrine of providence which Mr. Holyoake professed, of a miraculous interference, so as to interfere with the ordinary course of the laws of nature. What those methods are by which God works to meet the necessities of his creatures, how he may have arranged so as to prepare for all

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those wants he foresaw—the particular and special courses of Jehovah,—I, who do not understand the ordinary course of Providence, do not pretend to explain; but this one thing is certain, that Mr. Holyoake is entirely mistaken in imagining that the great doctrine of prayer, is a doctrine of prayer for defending ourselves from physical evils against the course of nature. I say there is no such doctrine in the New Testament from beginning to end. I said that Christ our Saviour forbade any such attempt to violate the laws of nature, and that that was tempting God; and the whole course of Mr. Holyoake's argument was an expectation that God would interfere to stop the ordinary course of the laws of nature. God's special Providence weaves in through human thoughts and human affairs in a way that we cannot understand, but in a way that does meet the wants and necessities of men. Mr. Holyoake referred to the prayer of faith that should save the sick: he knows that all Christians, except Roman Catholics, are agreed that miracles ceased with the apostles. He referred to the case of Elijah: he knows that the special providence of Judaism is not the special providence of Christianity. The special providence of Judaism was for the most part the defence of the body, the special providence of Christianity is the cultivation, enlargement, and ennobling of the soul. The Saviour promised to his disciples—"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name:" that is, in Christ's name, on his authority, and, therefore, according to his example,—"Father! nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." Mr. Holyoake refers to James; but he never quotes those passages which tell against him, and he ought to know them well. (A laugh.) Gentlemen, I hope you do not smile at that; I hope you expect that Mr. Holyoake as an honest man would quote those passages of Scripture which teach Scripture doctrine, and state that Scripture doctrine fully. If we come here to quote only those things that appear to us to be weak, and avoid those things that are strong, and you applaud and smile at that, then I say that is not investigation of truth, but seeking victory instead of honest inquiry. Here is a passage in James, which, if Mr. Holyoake had read, would have settled the whole doctrine in question, and all his argument about faith and works, as I shall show when he comes to the doctrine of the atonement, and then we shall see whether faith overthrows works, or is the basis of works. Now see what James would do in his hospital: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" That is, such faith. "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the

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body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." The doctrine of prayer will also be illustrated in the next topic to which I was going to call your attention, about Mr. Holyoake's special providence, namely, a third proposition in reply to the Secular pretence, but one to which I cannot now do justice, "that spiritual dependence may make men independent of material destruction." Mr. Holyoake talks of service and endurance, but in what list of men will be found more heroism than amongst those who have taken up the cross of a crucified Master, and who have said with Paul, "I am willing to die for the Lord Jesus,"—who have learned those noble words which taught not the pitiful weakness of "a wise self-defence,"—which promised no immunity from trial in the Secular pretence of a miraculous special providence; but taught boldness before kings and governors, who might think that in killing Christian martyrs they did God service; "rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets before you;" so they persecute me, and the disciple is not above his Lord. They were offered no primrose path of a Secular providence, but the thorny road of imprisonment, and martyrdom, at the scaffold and the stake, which they nobly endured, fearing not those who can kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do; saying to all tyrants, "Whether is it right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye;" and rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. All our present liberty has been built upon this heroism, of which, in a small way, Secularism sometimes boasts, and then condemns the meek endurance enforced in the Gospel, by which greater evils have been borne, and freedom secured for coming ages. Even now the process is going on, as the Bible is ever the pioneer of human liberty. In Madagascar, a furious tiger-queen slew thousands of Christians who had been transformed from savages into heroes; whilst her son, now joint regent, being converted to the faith, has proclaimed liberty to all, and opened his ports to every flag. Austria, the great stronghold of despotism, fears nothing so much as a Bible, which is instinctively felt by tyrants to be the precursor of mental independence, the most powerful foe of priestcraft and despotism: it is, therefore, a proscribed book. And there in Austrian Tuscany we find now those martyrs for whose freedom the religious public has been moved and sent forth its deputations, whilst religious martyrs are now paying the price of liberty for some future infidel, or for some, it may be, who are now good Catholics, as Mr. Holyoake declares there are now in England thousands who are good churchmen, to evade the civil disabilities, and the imaginary dangers of social degradation;

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who are too politic, and exercise a "special providence" of pretensions, because their principles are not the heroic inspirations of the Madiai and friends, on whose grave will rise the pillar of liberty, as their tomb becomes the pedestal of that magnificent column. And this will speedily be raised, for the like sufferings of our Puritan and Nonconformist forefathers have vindicated freedom in England, whose language now circles the globe, and whose press is free, so that as the *Times* declares and illustrates, the darkest and most distant deeds cannot escape exposure in those columns, to the light of day and the judgment of mankind. This will make the world echo with deeds that formerly could be hidden for a while, and so hasten that victory, not of arms, but ideas, which the Gospel commenced, and in which it upholds its self-sacrificing followers. So are the Madiai the true soldiers of Italy, on whose spirit of endurance Mazzini will mostly rely, as God lays a firm foundation for future liberty in the sufferings of men, who being trained, and like their captain, "made perfect through suffering," will give efficacy to their principles by the force of suffering and sympathy, conquering all opposition, as a vindication of that contemned but noble saying, "The meek shall inherit the earth;" whilst in thus subjugating all opposing agencies and being trained by martyrdom for glory, they exhibit in the eloquence of reality, what we here so poorly display in language, that "spiritual dependence makes men independent of material destruction." It also teaches men how to pray, and what to pray for—namely, in resignation to the Divine will, not as dictation to a slave: and not for a miraculous material liberation, but for strength of soul to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." The *Buona Novella*, an Italian Protestant journal, publishes two letters—one from Francesco, and the other from Rosa Madiai. The first is dated November 20th, and is as follows:

"Very honoured M——,—I would write more, but cannot, being in bed very ill. I do not think, however, that I shall die; but in all things let the will of God be done." This is his prayer. "What I can say to you, as a brother in Jesus our Saviour, is, that the more my illness shall increase, the more will increase in me the spirit of God." That is, God's presence and help, everywhere and at all times. "My respects to all. I cannot write more. Your faithful servant and brother in Christ Jesus,

"FRANCESCO MADIAI."

Does he, as Mr. Holyoake asserted most untruthfully, push aside religion when he comes to danger? No, he clings to it, and says,—"Yours faithfully in Jesus Christ."—"P.S. Do not tell my wife how ill I am." ("Oh! Oh!" and a laugh.)

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I think it is a disgrace to any one who can laugh at such a beautiful touch of nature. The letter of the wife, which is without date, is as follows. I shall read part of it. I wish you to understand how men are supported in religion, how prayer is answered, and what Christians who understand Christianity do pray for. See how they are laying the foundation of liberty by their quiet suffering.

"Dear Brother in Jesus Christ,—I reply at length to your precious letter, which I received while I was still at the Bargello. It is superfluous for me to relate to you all my vicissitudes—all that we have had to suffer, both I and my husband: but let God be praised, and let us praise him together for having made us victors by our Lord Jesus Christ." How victors? Had they escaped from prison? No, they were above prison—they could not be imprisoned; their souls were free. "In short, dear brother, if such injustice is for the glory of God, be it welcome; but pray for us fervently, in order that we may be enabled to serve and honour him in this heavy captivity." Not that they may be released, but that they may be true to their principles. That is their highest attainment. "My husband is very unwell, and that is my greatest affliction; for myself, I am very thin, but better in health by the grace of the Lord Jesus. I hope that you and your wife are well; I shall never forget how much she has suffered for me. Kiss the dear children for me." This does not seem like forgetting earth and natural human affections. They are all beautiful touches; the husband saying, "Do not tell my wife how ill I am," and the wife saying, "The worst of my afflictions is, that my husband is so ill." "Kiss the dear children for me." Do we, then, forget this world when we think of another? Does it not knit all hearts together in the highest bonds? "Tell them that my husband and myself exhort them in their exile not to fear the great ones of this corrupted world, for in a short time they will be in the dust." Yes, they will, and these very suffering men will undermine them. That is God's Providence; that is the way he always has done it, and he will do it now, for he is not in a hurry—he will work it in his own time. Armies may fall and be overthrown, but the army of martyrs will succeed in the end. Exhort them "that of the cause of Christ alone they should have a holy jealousy." Had they forgotten this in their affliction? as Mr. Holyoake says—did they cast it away then, when they had nothing else to look to? "Of the cause of Christ alone they should have a holy jealousy in their hearts and in their actions, and that to him with the Father and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory. ...t the Church pray for us. We hope that, with the blessing of

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God, who gives"—what?—Throws down the prison walls, and gives to us a present miraculous deliverance? Oh! no; they did not pray for this. "Who gives strength"—"strength to weak mortals like us, if any one should be called on to suffer for his cause:" that is, to die, for they are suffering now: but she only calls death "suffering:" "if any one should be called on to suffer for his cause, he will call to mind"—not that God will free him, but that "he will call to mind how much Jesus has suffered for us.

"Your sister in Christ,
"ROSA MADIAI."

We find in this, then, the real principle of prayer, and the great doctrine of Providence, and the presence of God in supporting and helping this man and this woman, and making them true heroes, before whose influence tyrants will tremble and fall. Finally, I will just say, that Mr. Holyoake was to have shown us those "benefits which would come to mankind through the removal of Christianity and the substitution of Secularism in its stead." He has not yet shown us a single benefit. All that he has done is this: he told us that Christianity obstructed one thing in the method of correcting children. But now if Mr. Holyoake has shown a single benefit, I dare say all of you will be able to say at once what the benefit was, and a hundred of you would say a hundred different things.

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THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 10, 1853.

THE UMPIRE:—Although it is not quite time, as the parties are prepared, it is proposed that the discussion should commence. I introduce, as Mr. Holyoake's chairman, Mr. James Watson.

MR. SYME afterwards arrived, and Mr. Watson vacated the chair in his favour.

THE UMPIRE:—I presume you all know Mr. Syme, the first evening's chairman for Mr. Holyoake.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—It will be agreeable to me that the proceedings of this night should be in accordance with the wish of our umpire, as expressed last evening; and whatever of a contrary tone may have been displayed, it has not been of my introduction. Permit me briefly to say, that the assertions you heard, that I had not supplied Mr. Grant with an outline of my main arguments, that I had not sought his views on providence, that I did not believe in conscience, that I was not subjected to applications for charitable assistance as he is, that we cancel our past writings, and many more things of this kind,—were simple misstatements. For the third time I was represented as saying, "I would rather go to hell than go to heaven with Mr. James;" whereas, what I did was to repeat an expression of Shelley's, that "I would rather go to hell with Plato and Lord Bacon than to heaven with Paley and Malthus—or, let me add, with Angell James." The phrase you so often heard imputed to me, namely, that "I doubt not the truthfulness of the prophets and the apostles," was not mine. What I said was this:—"I doubted not the truthful *purpose* of the prophets and the apostles." You may credit a man with the intention to speak the truth, without seeing reason to believe all that he says. A truthful purpose does not imply infallibility; and this is the plain meaning of the words I used with reference to Scripture. Allusion was made to the Madiai. We have always defended the

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right of the Christian to read his Bible; while no Christian body, except the Unitarians, has ever defended our right *not* to read the Bible. I myself transmitted to Dr. Kalley, the Madiai of 1844, assistance; and those who read my letters to that gentleman will find, that so far back as that date, ten years ago, I expressed the same class of opinions which I have explained in this debate. And this is an answer to the representation, that our opinions of this day are not the same substantially as those which we have hitherto held. Mr. Grant asked me for two engravings of Satan with which to illustrate his speech of last night. Now, I offer them to him on the simple condition, that he will accompany them with the words which explained our intention in using them. Touching his repeated solicitations for more particulars of my arguments, I have only to say, that I have given him all the information he can need, short of that of delivering my speeches to him before he comes here. Why I have not sent him texts is, that I do not often know which I shall use till he has spoken; and if I were to give him one which I might not afterwards employ, he would declare that I had wilfully misled him. With these indispensable explanations I turn to the subject of the evening—the death of Christ, its policy and its example. If you think that anything which I shall say is wrong in itself, or differs widely from your own prepossessions,—remember that if I should demand of you to think as I think, you would esteem it rude on my part; and it will be no less rude if you demand of me to think as you think. You have made no bargain to think as I think, nor have I made any bargain to think as you think; and as none of you propose to answer for me hereafter, none of you shall think for me here.

The scheme of the New Testament salvation embraces these propositions: First, the universal sinfulness of man; second, the great death-atonement of Christ for those sinners only who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; third, the expiation for inherited and constitutional sin is made by *another*, not by the sinner, and the salvation is available by faith only, and not by works; fourth, the penalty of unpardoned sin is coarse damnation to all eternity. We think the foundation of this scheme erroneous. The doctrine of the universal sinfulness of men, in the scriptural sense of deserving the wrath to come, is demoralizing and discouraging. When the young are taught that they are deplorably sinful by nature, it snaps the sinews of moral effort; while, on the other hand, the doctrine of the elementary goodness of human nature is a powerful inducement to purity and perseverance in wholesome development. Next, that scheme of human reformation seems to us seriously defective which has the element of *death* in it. Suppos-

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ing there is radical imperfection in our nature, this should not need death in order to save us, seeing that no man originated his own nature, or the condition in which he finds himself placed. Yet the scriptural condition of salvation is available only by the death of Christ. Here we stumble upon the old barbarous idea of satisfaction by death. Now, humanity, allow me to say, does not want *expiation*—it wants *reformation*. Sacrifice by death is the old contrivance of paganism—but if we consider salvation as a scheme, we should not choose a meek man to die for us, but a great man to instruct us; so that error, which is the cause of premature death and continual misery, should be at once extirpated. A hundred men can die for the world, and a thousand do die for it, in the name of patriotism, for one who instructs the world with equal nobility of devotion. If Christ—so it seems to me, judging the matter by the eye of merely human reason—if Christ, instead of bequeathing the world the melancholy symbol of the cross, had set up some star-shining standard of wisdom—if, instead of being the greatest of Jews he had made himself the greatest of men, had made himself the apex of a pyramid resting on Aristotle and Homer, on Bacon and Shakespeare, what a different world we should now have. (Cheers and hisses.)

MR. MORLEY:—I must, if you please, renew my intreaty that that form of disapproval should not be manifested. It is senseless and irritating; and I submit to both sides that that at all events should be avoided.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—Had he been the author of some great work in a language which all the world could read, containing statements which none could misunderstand, propositions which none could refute, theories which all could practise, diffusing order without prostration, freedom of thought without anarchy of speculation, and happiness without sensuality or finality,—how much better than to bequeath to us the sad and inexhaustible heritage of religious bitterness, interminable disputations, and noon-day gropings for deliverance in the midst of darkness which can be felt, and of strife which is to be deplored! As Christ had all knowledge, he foresaw these our wants; and as he had all wisdom and all power, he could easily have provided against them.

The next objection is, that we are told we need redemption from sin by an external hand. Now either sinfulness is inherited or acquired: if inherited, it is our misfortune, and not our fault; and if not our fault, we ought not to be in "danger of the judgment" on account of it. If that sin is acquired, would it not have been better that we should have been enabled to combat it with success,

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and so expiate it in the process of time? If sin is wrong, and needs satisfaction, let it be like the old Indian idea of satisfaction; let it have some proportion, but not stretch out its interminable length through all the weary ages of eternity. Expiation by another is not so wholesome as by ourselves. We know this to be the case, because it is disowned by human law. When Fauntleroy, the London banker, was about to suffer death for forgery, one Edmund Angelini generously offered himself to the Lord Mayor as willing to die in the banker's place; but that Christian functionary repudiated the idea as illegal and unsalutary, saying, "Justice required that the offender should suffer." Now, when a Christian government solemnly refuses to follow the example of God, it must be that there is antagonism between the ideas of human and divine justice. Expiation by proxy is not desirable, even in martyrdom: we accept it in our weakness, but we do not dare to devise it as a scheme—we only applaud it as a necessity. But a more serious objection is, that our salvation is made to depend on special faith, and not upon works. Now, faith or belief is not in itself a virtue, is not at our command; and on this account the scheme is inapplicable to human progress. It would have been more useful to have made salvation depend on works, upon services which are more or less at the command of all men. Faith, we repeat, is not always possible; if it were always possible, there would be no sectarian differences among men, to the scandal of the churches, and the injury of good feeling. It is so agreeable to agree, that if agreement in opinion could be commanded, there would be no distinctions of Catholic, of Protestant, of Independent, Baptist and Unitarian, of Realist or Secularist. But agreement of opinion is a battle to be fought out by unsleeping intellect and unshrinking courage; and in this warfare, which is the necessity of our progress, both sides are equally innocent where they are equally honest—just as in contending armies, soldiers under opposing standards are deemed equally honourable if equally brave: and religiously, every sincere man is equally entitled to salvation, whatever may be his belief.

If faith be held, as Coleridge defined it, as the concurrence of the will with the conclusions of the understanding, then I have faith, and all free-thinkers have faith; and we are as well entitled to salvation as the Christian upon that ground. We will not dispute with you, if by faith you mean a deep conviction, and a reasonably-founded confidence as necessary to all correct and earnest practice; but we assert, without hesitation and without equivocation, that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is not *the* faith necessary for human salvation, because other courses are open, which, according to human reason, should secure for a man usefulness in

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time, peace in death, and happiness hereafter. The only value there is in any conviction, is in reference to the fruits which may grow out of it. Faith is but the means to the end, and not the end itself. It is the *end*, the *result*, that is a virtue, not the medium. Now, it happens in human experience that the same conclusion may be arrived at, in twenty different ways, by men of active and widely-informed intellects. Undoubtedly we value that mode most which produces the clearest, the surest, the widest, and the best result; but we make the result the test—it is the result to which we look; we do not make the merit to lie in the faith, but in the fruit; and it would be a hurtful and repressive restriction on the genius and research of men, to confine them all, as the theory of salvation does, to one mode of belief. If I can deduce a law of life which shall be as harmless as the Christian's—one, indeed, by which I can walk blamelessly before men, why should I not be left free to do so? Why should not my salvation lie in the direction of my freedom, my development, my happiness, and the promotion of the public good? Why should the Christian sit in orthodox inquisition over me? Why should I be dragooned by religious criticism into one mode of faith, when, as I think, higher and purer faiths are open to me?

But the worst feature of all is, that the scriptural idea of salvation includes in it the superadded punishment of the sinner, and his endless torment—torment of inconceivable anguish, contradicting all human ideas of justice, and making life one long dismay to all who are brought under the influence of such a faith; whence there arises a double immorality—the sense of injustice and of terror. We say, the New Testament denounces a coarse damnation against the unbeliever.

The New Testament was always a sad book to me. In my youth it filled me with gloomy apprehensions; its dark shadow was over the path of my boyhood, and when the struggle of life began seriously with me, I found it left me powerless. In no direction do I discover such painful signs of the moral torpidity of our public men, as when I meditate on the indiscriminate praise which Reformers bestow upon the Bible. Either they do not believe what they read, or they do not feel what they read. Open the orthodox half of that book, and you find Theology is lowered before you with a dark scowl on the very threshold of God's Word. There is a terror in the third chapter of Matthew, which has impressed me ever since I was a child. There the world is warned of the "wrath to come;" there Christ is foreshadowed as the austere husbandman, who will decimate our families, who will thoroughly purge his floor, who will indeed gather his wheat into his garner, but will burn up (what he may hold to

be) the chaff with unquenchable fire. What warnings of woe! what images of desolation! what language of terror! When I came to re-examine the New Testament as a book of advocacy, I found it to contain a revelation of two Christs—Christ the Gentle, and Christ the Austere; Christ the Gentle submitting, loving, suffering, serving; Christ the Austere, imperious, frowning, dark, terrible, punishing; and I could not trust *him* who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me," while I thought of him who said, "The believer shall be saved, and the unbeliever shall be damned." I could not trust *him* who said, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you," while I thought of him who said, with equal emphasis, "Whoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven;" who said, that "in the end of the world he would send his angels to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Now, his gentle words distil, like the songs of morning, over the earth, and you think that mankind are about to welcome the dawning reign of love, and you exult as you think you behold the rays of the sun of salvation shooting up in the eastern sky, when anon you start and shudder at the sight of the hideous "worm that never dies" crawling before your path, and the heavens first grow dark, and then lurid, with the flames that are never quenched. You listen, and you hear a voice of affection saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God;" then there breaks on the astonished ear the menacing and Draconian warning, "Whoever shall offend one of the little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." In assuring accents you are invited to "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life;" and the next moment reason is appalled and paralyzed by those ominous words, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned"—words which read to the conscientious thinker like the handwriting upon the wall. Who dare venture to inquire, in the face of those portentous words—words which have converted Europe into one vast inquisition, where every man is subjected to a Sectarian *espionage*, and every orthodox priest is a familiar? But he who believeth not shall be damned—cast into that dark pit, large enough to hold a world, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth; where you may hear, and that for ever, the shriek—perhaps of your child, perhaps of your father! And these are the glad tidings of the Gospel; these are the inducements to the young and independent thinker; these are the consolations of Christianity to the working classes!

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Now, these are my objections to salvation, as preached by evangelical ministers, and as indeed, truly enough, too truly, founded upon the New Testament. Let not Mr. Grant avoid the argument, on the ground that he is not acquainted with my texts. My objection is to the fact; the scheme is unsatisfactory; the example is immoral. Do not tell me that this is too solemn a topic for debate. If not too solemn a subject for you to preach upon, it is not too solemn for me to question, who have been doomed to hear it. Did you not poison the happiness of my youth by this doctrine? and shall I not in my manhood demand on what authority you did it? Do you tell me eternal punishments are true? Then I answer,—

> "I'd rather be a Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,
> So that, standing on some pleasant lea,
> I might have glimpses that would make me less forlorn."

Mr. Grant expressly demanded that our religions should come into collision. I will take care that they do; and to mark this plainly, I will say, that while you believe that some of our fellow-creatures will be sent to hell for ever, I do not believe, if there exists a hell, that such a one will exist for ever; and as the logic of poetry is often more impressive than that of prose, I shall cite the prayer of Aquinas, rendered lately in *The Leader*, by a gentleman who has the same right to expound the Scriptures here as Mr. Grant himself has. The prayer of Aquinas was for Satan and you will see, in the tones of this prayer and its purport, whether it is possible that a God of love will commit his mere erring creatures to eternal perdition, when the same principle of love should save those who are said already to have been sent there by him:—

> "O God," he said, "it cannot be,
> Thy morning Star with endless moan
> Should lift his fading orbs to Thee,
> And Thou be happy on Thy throne.
> It were not kind, nay, Father, nay,
> It were not just, O God, I say;
> Pray for the devil, Jesus, pray!
>
> "How can thy kingdom ever come,
> While the fair angels howl below?
> All holy voices would be dumb,
> All loving eyes would fill with woe,
> To think the lordliest peer of heaven,
> The starry leader of the seven,
> Would never, never be forgiven.

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'Pray for the devil, Jesus, pray;
O Word that made thine angel speak!
Lord! let thy pitying tears have way;
Dear God! not man alone is weak;
What is created still must fall,
And fairest still we frailest call:
Will not Christ's blood avail for all?

"Pray for the devil, Jesus, pray;
O Father, think upon thy child;
Turn from thine own bright world away,
And look upon that dungeon wild.
O God! O Jesus! see how dark
That den of woe! O Saviour, mark
How angels weep, how groan! Hark, hark!

"He will not, will not do it more:
Restore him to his throne again;
Oh! open wide that dismal door,
Which presses on the souls in pain;
So men and angels all will say,
Our God is good. Oh! day by day
Pray for the devil, Jesus, pray."

"All night Aquinas knelt alone,
Alone with black and dreadful night,
Until before his pleading moan
The darkness ebb'd away in light.
Then rose the saint, and "God," said he,
"If darkness change to light with thee,
The devil may yet an angel be."

My time, I find, is too nearly expired to do what I else intended. I will only add, that I have cited that prayer for putting, in the extremest form, that if God be a God of love, as you in some parts of your Scriptures represent him, it is impossible even that Satan himself shall be an inhabitant of that dreary world for ever; and if hell be an inconceivable thing—if it be an immoral enormity to contemplate, shocking the common humanity of our nature with regard to Satan himself—how much more horrible is the thought, that they who are our friends, who are our relatives, among whom we have passed our time—that they, for no other fault than that they are not able to believe that which another man is able to believe, shall be doomed by a God of love to that miserable, to that interminably wretched fate.

MR. GRANT:—Ladies and Gentlemen,—Mr. Holyoake undertook this evening to discuss the doctrine of the atonement. He has not discussed the doctrine of the atonement. He has entered into

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about five questions in his speech: one, the doctrine of hereditary depravity; another, the doctrine of responsibility for belief; another, the doctrine of eternal punishment. But he has said very little about the simple doctrine of the atonement—of God's mercy to mankind by Jesus Christ. This was a question which certainly Mr. Holyoake should have entered into a little more fully; and he should have given us some passages of Scripture upon that subject, to show what the doctrine of atonement is. If he wishes to discuss the doctrine of responsibility for faith, I shall be very happy to discuss that doctrine with him; but we ought now to confine ourselves to those doctrines which we have agreed upon beforehand, and not confuse our auditors by departing from the subject. Mr. Holyoake has laid very great stress upon being saved by faith. Notice whether he answers this simple question: Can he save anybody without faith on his system? If he can, why does he teach you his system to lead you to think as he does? If he cannot, then his system is salvation by faith, as well as ours, and he should leave that question alone. The great subject of this evening's debate, is to be the doctrine of the atonement, which, as defined in our correspondence, is not the question of Adam's sin imputed to us, not the question of responsibility for belief, not the doctrine of eternal punishment, but this, as Mr. Holyoake knows, for he has the correspondence in his possession, and has had it often before his eyes—"God's method of mercy to sinners by the Redeemer." I have now overtaken, on former nights, all Mr. Holyoake's positions, whether as to the precedence of time over eternity, or as to the providence of man in opposition to the providence of God, or the sufficiency of human nature to provide and obey a morality, in which Mr. Holyoake assumed that it was just possible an Atheist might attain to moral principles, that he is not necessarily sinful, without considering how much doctrine and influence is obtained by infidels from Christianity, and without fairly meeting the great experiment of the world before Christ, which culminated in the artistic refinement, philosophic beauty, and moral debasement of the Greeks: every one of these positions of Secularism being irretrievably damaged, and left by their advocate to their fate, we have a clear space for considering the great doctrine of the atonement; and I shall be pardoned if I spend but little of this precious time in supporting some statements, that I promised to maintain in a few opening sentences. This I shall dismiss in three minutes, to prove that Socialism, in the views of Robert Owen, does destroy the family bond and private property, and set up animals as our standard of rational virtue. These are introduced, in order to show that there is some danger in contradicting any statement I make here on my own absolute and cer-

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tain knowledge; and this statement, which I am now about to make, will not be disproved by any of Mr. Holyoake's generous observations on "a minister of the religion of charity," when our argument has to do with truths and matters of fact. At the beginning of Mr. Owen's seventh lecture on marriage, he says, "I resume the subject of marriage, because it is the source of more demoralization, crime, and misery, than any other single cause, with the exception of religion and private property. These three together form the great trinity causes of crime and immorality amongst mankind." And in another place, in the third lecture, he says, "A rational being cannot be formed within the existing single family arrangements of the world." In the seventh lecture, Mr. Owen sets up animals as our models of chastity and marriage, thus inquiring, "Is there any sexual crime or prostitution among any other tribe of animals? Do they act wisely or viciously" in this respect? "Is it not probable that nature, if not interfered with by presumptuous man, would regulate and direct this propensity in the human race as wisely for their good, as she regulates and directs it for all other races of animals?" He declares, in the second lecture, that "man's thoughts and feelings are nature's thoughts and feelings, and not of man's creation; and nature can do no wrong." Whilst in several of the lectures he condemns the natural feeling of parents as "animal fondness," which unfits them to educate their children, and says, that a man who does not use his riches for the general good "cannot be a good man," and that priests are the devil: so that nature excuses all men in all things, except rich men and teachers of religion. Mr. Holyoake, on oath, declared the same three principles of opposition to religion, marriage, and private property, in the trial of a leading Socialist, for transferring to his private pocket some thousands of pounds, bequeathed for the social cause; and though his oath was "not a declaration of faith," his evidence professed to be, and therefore he should not question my charity because I assert, in disussion what he, on oath, affirmed in a court of justice (*Reasoner*, vol. xii. p. 344), what is in every book of Robert Owen's, and in every volume of the *Reasoner*, as well as in Owen individualized or diluted by Mr. Holyoake, who, as secretary to the English Rationalists, informed some foreign ones, that Mr. Owen taught Socialism to the ruling powers, and Mr. Holyoake adapted it to the people; and no doubt there are some marks of design in his method of adaptation, as well as in his method of disavowing here what he has most avowed elsewhere, and seeking to discredit those whose only sin is the plain statement of his and Mr. Owen's discreditable doctrines. I am far from being so severe on Mr. Robert Owen as his eulogist. I said

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nothing of his character; therefore that doggerel poetry about the Bishop of Exeter was out of the question, but only stated his opinions, which were not disproved by begging the question, in an uncharitable and irrelevant dissertation on charity. I said not that I would exclude Mr. Owen from heaven; the atonement is for him as well as for me, and I should be glad, for his sake, if he accepted it; for this would relieve him from the doom Mr. Holyoake chose in his behalf, that "he should have a heaven to himself," which is a parable on his social doctrines, and threatens him with solitary confinement for ever. I may, then, safely dismiss this diversion of defending Mr. Owen's motives as a method of impugning the motives of those who only stated his sentiments: that the attention of the audience may be concentrated on the important subject of the Christian doctrine of the atonement, as exhibited in the New Testament, which is the only standard recognized for this debate. Nor will Mr. Holyoake expect me to indorse every view professedly deduced from this authority, any more than I might charge upon him every professed deduction from reason, which is his New Testament, and the professed guide of all men, whether sceptics, Christians, or Pagans: and would, on this method of arguing, lay upon Mr. Holyoake the onerous burden of every opinion of every man, all theories of science and philosophy, all forms of theology, all the absurdities of superstition, which, after the respective fashions of the holders of such views, are all defended by reason; for even the absolute spiritual dependence on a priest, or infallible church, is defended by its adherents, on certain forcible reasons, for not trusting to that form of reason called "private judgment." So that reason, in the general sense of human reason, would be a large volume indeed, and is exposed to more uncertainty than Mr. Holyoake's exaggerations of the differences in interpreting the Bible, which are only some of the cases that prove the fallibility of reason, not the imperfections of the Scriptures. Therefore we have to consider Mr. Holyoake's deductions from reason, and my deductions from Christianity. If we do not so narrow our ground, we shall never meet; nor must Mr. Holyoake again charge me with conceding a doctrine, if I do not accept his view of it; nor imagine that any general reference to creeds, or churches, or supposed popular views, will supersede an appeal to chapter and verse in the New Testament; whilst any references of importance should be so indicated, that I can with ease turn to them and examine them. It will also further narrow the question, if he bears in mind what I said in our correspondence, that I should "attend rather to the moral and practical, than to the metaphysical side of Chritianity;" for it is with practical questions we have to deal, not with theo-

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logical speculations, or with points not revealed, but with the moral bearing of what is plainly affirmed by evangelists and apostles. The "unsatisfactory scheme" which Mr. Holyoake adduces, must not be his scheme, but the statements of the New Testament; not about other doctrines, but this one doctrine of the atonement; whereas he seems to be dissatisfied with his own and other people's imagined explanations, on six or seven different topics, for which Christianity is in no sense responsible. The doctrine in question is thus described by Mr. Holyoake:—"The atonement, by the death of Christ, is unsatisfactory as a scheme, and immoral as an example." This is one of the propositions he promised to maintain with respect to Christianity. He does not state wherein the scheme is unsatisfactory, nor wherein the example is immoral. This he might have done, but he did not do it.

The first statement—I am now speaking of what Mr. Holyoake gave me as to his views before the discussion—the first statement may refer to the difficulties involved in a philosophy of the atonement; on what principles it is appropriate and reasonable, that such a method of mercy should be adopted. Now it is very possible that any solution Mr. Holyoake may present, and even the solutions of others, may be unsatisfactory; their explanation of the scheme may leave us in the dark, but the failure is in them, not in the Gospel—in their scheme of explanation, not in God's scheme of mercy. The wiser, more practical and truly philosophical inquiry would be, the suitableness of this scheme to man—how far it is adapted to meet his natural longings; whether everywhere human nature has not expressed itself, common sense and the very heart of humanity everywhere proclaimed, that some such medium of mercy as a visible or historical manifestation of Divine forgiveness, is requisite to give peace to man's conscience, as declared by the religions and sacrifices of every nation under heaven; in Homer, and in all mythologies, whether of Greeks or barbarians, during the whole history of the world? And if in this way, men have everywhere looked for a sign or contract, a covenant or testament of pardon, is it not philosophical to deal with man as he is, and meet his wants through the recognized channel of their expression? That, therefore, is the best scheme, and satisfactory as a scheme, which meets the case; however, it may afford some recondite questions to those who are too reasonable to be practical. Nor can they who profess to found morals on human nature overlook the fact, that religion is founded on human nature, in the very same respect. There is a truth at the foundation of all broad tendencies of man, however misdirected. Superstition proves that man will have a religion; sacrifices prove that man longs for

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an atonement; and Christianity gives the only answer to these universal tendencies, and the only corrective to their previous misdirections; by offering an exalted object of worship, and an atonement that encourages morality, whilst it freely pardons sin: —What other satisfactoriness do we require in a scheme, except that it answer the end? That is satisfaction,—to satisfy the world's wants, not to satisfy the crotchets of a minute philosophy. If a mechanic should invent a lock, and leave it as a firm security, our inquiry as to its satisfactoriness as a scheme, would not turn upon the difficulty of explaining all its complicated wards, and in proving that different advocates have explained its internal structure very differently, and all with some degree of confusion. Suppose all this is not made out very satisfactorily; the scheme may still be good, for the true question for a man's satisfaction is, not some theory of locks, but will this lock answer the end of baffling force to wrench it, or cunning to pick it?—Is it a means of security? If so, then I am satisfied. This is the true method and purpose of all inquiries, whether in common life, in matters of science, or of religion; and the inquiry after any other satisfaction is unscientific. I cannot make out to the satisfaction of my own reason the theory of life,—on what its force depends, or what it is, or why it is nourished by certain material conditions; and no one has ever yet made it out; still we know that we are nourished by our food, and that it is a comfort and satisfaction, and the end of all philosophy. Any one who will afford me a metaphysical satisfaction as to the growth of a tree, why a seed draws from the elements its proper nourishment, and on what forces it is marshalled into growth, will afford me more light than all books of science. To say it is done "by the laws of nature," is to feed my reason with the garbage of mysticism. Done by a law! This doing is the only law I know. Is it done by being done? Is the process turned into a law, and then made a cause of itself? The whole is very unsatisfactory; but that here is good timber, which will actually grow best in ascertainable circumstances, within our own control,—this is philosophy and satisfaction; all else is fancy and bewilderment, and not a matter of science. This true philosophy is well described in the following passage from *Mosses from an Old Manse* (pp. 28, 29): "Here at an early period (our philosopher) had studied the wonders of the human frame, and attempted to fathom the process by which nature assimilates all her precious influences from earth and air, and from the spiritual world, to create and foster man, her masterpiece. The latter pursuit, however, he had long laid aside, in unwilling recognition of the truth, against which all seekers sooner or later stumble,—that our great creative mother, while

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she amuses us with apparently working in the broadest sunshine, is yet severely careful to keep her own secrets, and in spite of her pretended openness, shows us nothing but results." It is, therefore, with "results" alone that we have to do, in seeking "satisfaction" as to any process or "scheme," and not in knowing the causes or adaptations of the agents at work; but in the fitness of the results to our condition. And whilst Mr. Holyoake may say of the Gospel that it filled him with gloom and apprehension, a million Christians could respond, "It fills us with happiness, hope, and joy." All who have tried the scheme, love it; and that is a sufficient answer. This method of confining our attention to results, is strenuously adopted and misapplied by our free-thinkers, when they assure us that we are ignorant of the powers of material nature, and do not know but that they are capable in themselves of accounting for and causing all phenomena; they then decry explanations, and Mr. Holyoake cannot account for anything; they then decry satisfactory schemes of theory, and recede into a wise ignorance, calling upon us to resume the faith they explode in religion, and worship with contented awe, before the outer court of the temple of nature; then they gladly appeal to ignorance, as the mother of their devotion; but when they come to religious inquiries, like Shylock, they demand their "pound of flesh;" they will have satisfaction, though they will give none, and express astonishment if we should require any. Now we say, deal with religion as with nature: apply the strict scientific method, which is obliged to be satisfied with results, and can discover in the processes which lead to them, no theoretical satisfaction—can see there only facts and effects, not explanations and causes. When our friends will afford us a satisfactory theory of the growth of grass, that shall leave no insurmountable difficulties, we will give a perfect theory of the atonement; meanwhile, as the grass grows for cattle, and is satisfactorily adapted to meet their wants, we find, according to the experience of mankind, the exact same satisfaction in a method of mercy to guilty man. I may here refer to one method of representing this doctrine which is very frequent in Secular works. I was not quite sure whether Mr. Holyoake trenched upon that in his last speech, but I have no doubt he will in his next; and if he does not bring it forward, this will at least answer a formidable argument as they think, and which they bring forward elsewhere; and anything else Mr. Holyoake says in his next speech, will be met in my next speech. The assertions so confidently made in infidel literature, that God is described as having no pity on man, no love to him, till some innocent victim is offered to appease Divine wrath—the declarations that God in the atonement is represented

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an implacable towards man, till he is softened and satisfied by the blood of his Son—form so painful a perversion, so directly opposed to the most explicit declarations of the New Testament, that we cannot satisfactorily understand how men could be led into such distorted views, and venture on such wild declamation. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he first loved us, and"—as a proof and expression, not as the cause of it—"gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This is not the frown Mr. Holyoake speaks of, to fill men with terror, but God's smile to inspire even the most sinful with confidence and hope. "For God so loved the world"—not because his Son was slain, but so as to "send his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." If, therefore, instead of vainly wasting our breath, to pray for the devil, of whom we know so little, we should pray for ourselves, this salvation would be ours. Does it not, then, directly contradict Scripture to affirm that God, according to the doctrine of the atonement, would have no mercy on man till a victim was offered; when he sent his Son from mercy—when "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto men?" I am ashamed to be obliged to quote such passages as these, which give the most prominent idea of Christianity, and which ought to be well known and acknowledged by those who presume to controvert its doctrines. Mr. Holyoake, it is true, charged one gentleman with abandoning the doctrine of the atonement, because he stated such views as I am stating now; but I state them here beforehand, and this will save him the trouble of making any such charge against me, of conceding the doctrine, because I show how he has misrepresented it, every time he has touched it. Ought we to be obliged to *instruct* objectors, in the well-known truth that Jesus Christ is the gift of God's love to mankind—not the motive for his mercy, but his way of showing it? They who need to be taught this, should rather attend a Testament class in a Sunday-school, than enter upon an infidel platform: they have need to be taught what are the first elements of religion, while they set up as teachers in opposition to it. It is their scheme of the atonement which is unsatisfactory, because it is untrue. I am now giving you Mr. Holyoake's scheme—he knows it, if you do not. Their own scheme of Secularism is an unsatisfactory assemblage of assertions without proof, propositions without definitions, a jumble of contradictions and evasions, mysticism and confusion, from which they take refuge in attacking their own misrepresentations of the atonement; and when we set them right, they declare, as Mr. Holyoake did of Mr. Syme, of Nottingham, that we have conceded a doctrine, instead of confessing that we have proved

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their unacquaintedness with it, or their misrepresentations of it. And Mr. Holyoake often parades as our concessions, what ought to be his confessions of his haste, incompetence, or unfairness. But since he is so great and peculiar an advocate of science, will he favour us with a satisfactory scheme of two things—the telegraph and the steam-engine, such as shall explain the forces at work? Then I will give him the exact same satisfaction as to the theory of the atonement.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—A word will suffice upon the allusions to Mr. Owen. There are three heavens, and as St. Paul told us that he was caught up into the third heaven, I presume there is no communication between them; therefore if Mr. Owen were in one I should think he would not be in "solitary confinement." If he would be so, Mr. Grant gives a worse picture of heaven than I should venture to do myself. Touching what he read of Mr. Owen's I will only say to him, as he said to me last evening, Be good enough to read those parts also which tell against you. I think I can better bring you to an understanding of the question which we have under consideration by referring to some statements which we had made last week and which incidentally have been repeated to-night. I am asked first, whether I can save any without faith in my system; but Mr. Grant overlooks this—that if I require faith in my system I do not propose to damn those who do not concede it. I told him in my speech that I granted him that if he meant by faith a particular conviction of the rightfulness of any course, I agreed with that idea of faith; but what I object to is that you require one special thing to be believed in by everybody. There is one Mr. Thomas, a Universalist preacher, just now preaching in the Western Literary Institution, who the other Sunday morning used this illustration. He said, if a physician should go into an hospital where there were a hundred patients requiring consideration, and he should take one and consider his case carefully, and write out a prescription for him, and then tell him to hand it round to all the others to go home and get cured by that one prescription, we should say that would not answer, and would be impossible. Now this is precisely the scheme of salvation. You have one single recipe to cure the whole of humanity, and unless everybody believe it as these gentlemen believe it, they say we are to be damned in consequence of our disbelief. It is against this impossibility and immorality which we protest. Nor does Mr. Grant tell us—I have asked him time after time—what is meant by this saving faith; he has not ventured upon any definition whatever upon the subject; we have not heard a single syllable

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from him as to what really constitutes faith. I have besought him in our correspondence, I have besought him on this platform, and the only thing he seems to say with freedom is that I misquote Scripture or pervert Scripture. I have not misquoted a single passage of Scripture nor have I perverted a single sentence in it. I have just as much right to read Scripture, and just as much right to form an opinion upon it, as Mr. Grant has, and my word upon that subject is as good as Mr. Grant's himself. He has a right to say that my reading does not agree with his—that is all he has a right to say; he has no right to say or assume that his reading is the true one. Let me give you an instance. Mr. Grant in his speech last week said: "I came here to deny that doctrine of providence, of the miraculous interference with the ordinary course of the laws of nature. Mr. Holyoake is entirely mistaken in imagining that the great doctrine of prayer is a doctrine of prayer for defending ourselves from physical evils in the course of nature. I say there is no such doctrine in the New Testament from beginning to end." That is Mr. Grant's own speech—that was his distinct and solemn declaration. Now I will read to you, not my own account of the matter, but the account of Mr. Rathbone Gregg (who writes in the *Edinburgh Review*, where Mr. Rogers has written upon Reason and Faith) a man of reputation, of unquestioned candour and intelligence. He says: "It is impossible to disguise from ourselves that the New Testament teaches in the most *unreserved* manner and in the strongest language the doctrine of the *efficacy of prayer in modifying the divine purposes and in obtaining the boons asked for at the throne of grace.*" Then he says: "Few of Christ's exhortations to his disciples occur more frequently than that to constant prayer, and no promises are more distinct or reiterated than that their prayer shall be heard and *answered*; 'Watch and pray.' 'This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.'" And then Mr. Grant alluded distinctly to the miracles which Christ had himself performed. Mr. Grant said we were to follow his example. I did follow his example, and Christ's own example even was more eloquent than his words, for he perpetually interfered with the order of nature and told his disciples that the same kind would go out also by fasting, by prayer, and faith. Then Christ said, "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them." "Ask, and it shall be given you." "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" The parable of the unjust judge was delivered to enforce the same conclusion. "No one," says Mr. Gregg, "can read such passages and numberless

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others of a similar character with which both Testaments abound, and doubt the opinion held both by Christ and his disciples was that 'Jehovah is a God that heareth and answereth prayer;' that favours are to be obtained from him by earnest and reiterated entreaty; that whatever good thing his sincere worshippers petition for with faith shall be granted to them, if consonant to his purposes, and shall be granted in consequence of their petition; that in fact and truth, apart from all subtleties and subterfuges, *the designs of God can be modified and swayed like those of an earthly father by the entreaties of his children. This doctrine is set forth throughout the Jewish Scriptures in its coarsest and nakedest form, and it reappears in the Christian Scriptures in a form only slightly modified and refined.*" There is the declaration of a gentleman whose intelligence is not to be disputed. Mr. Grant told me last week that in the Testament from beginning to end no doctrine of that sort could be found. Surely a man who thus denies the very words of his own book has no right to say that I pervert the Scriptures because I simply quote them to you. I will give you another instance. Christ said to his Apostles, when he sent them out upon their mission—(and it was said of those to whom they should preach, showing that miracles were not to cease with the Apostles, as Mr. Grant said) but were to continue with those who believed to the end of time; "Go ye forth into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Well, it does seem to me that when a man says that these passages do not mean what I represented—that the humble, trusting, devout Christian has no right to expect that God would hear and answer his prayer, and be an ever-present help in time of need—it does seem to me that to say that is to deny the very words of the Saviour himself. The next brief point I notice is this. Touching what are called concessions, I will say, notwithstanding what Mr. Grant has told you, that last evening he conceded as much as satisfied me. He said: "The gospel is built altogether upon the supposition that there are moral elements in human nature." Now that is what I pleaded for—that if there were moral elements in human nature they existed independently of Christianity, and my argument was that they could be cultivated independently of the Bible. Mr. Grant represents that this statement of mine was a misrepresentation, that I imputed

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to him doctrines which did not belong to the Christian religion, and that all he has said is what they have always been saying. Now I tell him that these words which he then repeated, and gave to me as the doctrine of Independency, are such as I could not have expected from him. The first man, and the only man, so far as I know, who ever did say them, was the Archbishop of Dublin who is at present in the occupancy of that see. These were his words: "I have said that the object of the Scriptures is to reveal to us religious and moral truths; but even this as far as regards the latter, must be admitted with considerable modification. God has not revealed to us a system of morality such as would have been needed for beings who had no other means of distinguishing right and wrong." [Interruption.] Now I have marked these passages because they are important to my argument. If you do not permit me to mark them you had better tell me not to speak at all. I am reasoning here for the purpose of establishing the independency and innocence of that system which you call Secularism and which you profess to brand. I am here to defend the possibility of taking a course [Interruption and cries of "Question!"]

MR. MORLEY:—I must appeal to those who have called "Question!" whether we must not rely on the discretion of each gentleman in conducting his own argument. If Mr. Holyoake is not speaking to the question Mr. Grant will probably take advantage of that, and show that he has not done so. But I call upon you all to listen with calmness.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—Now the question of this evening to which I was just then coming, is the doctrine of the death of Jesus Christ: its example, and its policy. That question was written down in our correspondence; it was the only question I proposed to discuss on this night, and Mr. Grant himself asked me to do it. When I explain my views upon this subject Mr. Grant says they are not his views. But I presume he is here to consider what my views are—whether or not they are sound, and whether he can answer them. If I am to open the discussion he must attend to what I say. If you alter the arrangement, and put Mr. Grant to open it, I shall attend to what he has to say. To say that is not the question is to deny my right to say what the question is. To-day or yesterday was published a new work by Mr. Miall, Member for Rochdale, entitled *The Bases of Belief*. That gentleman repeats there what he has said in a previous work: "A finger-post may answer for mere guidance—the most arbitrary symbols may serve the understanding for instruction—

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but would you gain over to any truth man's will, man's heart, man's self, that truth must be introduced and recommended to him by a visible and intimate companionship with humanity." Now, I say, if you, as Christians, want to gain me over to your truths you must follow that rule. But when you present to me the Christian scheme in connection with eternal punishments, I say then it is not "in companionship with humanity," and therefore I reject it. There is a story told of Begum Sumroo, who placed one of her dancing girls in a living tomb, and put her own bed over the tomb in order to listen to the groans of the dying victim; Europe is horrified at the narrative; but if the Scriptures be true, that is just what will take place with regard to him who is said to be a God of Love, and who will hear the doleful groans of his miserable creatures for ever as they burn in hell. Mr. James, who is Mr. Grant's superior in his own church —and I refer to persons so nearly connected with him to remind him, as I am obliged to do, what his own doctrines are—Mr. James, in most awful language, speaks of the doctrine of eternal punishment. He says: "The loss of the soul includes in it all that is contained in that dreadful word Hell! How true as well as solemn are the words of Christ, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' All the tears that ever have been, or ever will be shed on the face of the earth; all the groans that ever have been, or ever will be uttered; all the anguish that ever has been, or ever will be endured by all the inhabitants of the world, through all the ages of time, do not make up an equal amount of misery to that which is included in the loss of one human soul. Justly, therefore, do you say, who are exposed to this misery, 'What shall I do to be saved?'" Mr. James says that if I have but one single sin upon my soul the curse of the Almighty will lie upon me, and he points to the remedy for this by referring to what the Philippian jailer said to Paul, "What must I do to escape this danger?" and the answer that was given, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Is not this the question? Do you mean to tell me that the doctrine of the atonement does not contain this terrible element—that of saving us from the wrath to come? Was not that the entire purpose of Christ's mission? When you say that this atonement was a satisfaction to God's justice, you forget it was to be a satisfaction to his wrath. You forget the intention was to propitiate him—"Without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins"—that is the distinct declaration of Scripture. I say, the broad, the palpable, the demoralising element in the doctrine of the atonement is that of eternal punishment. I ask Mr. Grant

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whether or not that doctrine is there; I ask him whether or not it is true; and I tell him that my objection to that doctrine is that it revolts my moral sense—it seems so inhuman, so disproportionate. Mr. Grant says, mankind have always panted from time immemorial for a sacrifice. Have mankind panted from time immemorial to be eternally punished? It is that fearful element in that doctrine which makes the Scriptures so utterly unacceptable, and what is more, makes them a heritage of dismay to all who believe in them. I have seen Christian believers as well as Mr. Grant: I have seen them who have been reared in his own churches: I have seen them who have been reared by Mr. James. I am not speaking here hypothetical doctrines; I am not stating here experience which I have no right to bring forward —I am speaking of my own. Mr. Grant ought not to forget that I was taught by his own religious superiors, and I learned those very things in the church of which he is himself a member. What I say, therefore, is perfectly relevant to the subject. I say, everywhere you brand our doctrines; you represent us as making war upon mankind, as destroying their eternal welfare. You say we are immoral; you say our doctrines are a terror; you sometimes invoke the law against us, and always public opinion. Your entire sting is here: if it were not for the doctrine of eternal punishment you would not be able thus to brand us and thus to influence the public against us. The public are persuaded that we appear as their enemies under the guise of destroying their souls eternally. Now my argument is, that the doctrine of the atonement includes the idea of eternal, never-ending punishment, for no other crime than that I am not able to believe as you are able to believe. I say, belief is not at my command; and yet you represent that the God of Love will serve me thus, for a fault which is no fault of mine. If you show me that it is true I will believe it, and shall be willing and ready to believe it; but if you say the God of Love will act thus—if you cannot explain it, if you cannot defend it, if you cannot justify it, if you cannot make it consonant with human reason, but say as other Ministers say, "The ways of God are past finding out," that his methods of mercy are inscrutable—I say if you cannot understand it, what sort of profit can we have by thinking and meditating upon it? You tell me that I am to be merciful to my fellow creatures, and yet tell me that God spared not his own Son. You tell me that as a proof of his love he gave his Son to suffer. What occasion should there have been that his Son should be sacrificed? Why that terrible expiation? Why that painful spectacle? Why our salvation by means of death? What had we done that all this should be necessary? One question which

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I put to Mr. Grant in our correspondence was this: "Was the death of Christ to placate Deity or not?" If Mr. Grant says, Yes, then I say Deity was angry, and the Scriptures do say that he is "angry with the wicked every day." But if God is angry with the wicked, as Jonathan Edwards has remarked, then he is the most miserable of beings, seeing that there are millions of sinners who must be thus causing him infinite pain day and night while the world lasts. But if you say that the death of Christ was not intended to placate Deity, then I say Deity was not offended; if not offended, then there is no offence against God; if no offence against God, there is no sin against God; and it is *not* "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world, to save sinners" from the wrath to come. All sin, therefore, must be relative, must be against each other, and does not need eternal punishment to cancel it. If that is not the question, Mr. Grant will be good enough to say what doctrine of the atonement he has been accustomed to preach, or is recognized by his church, which does not include that terrible and immoral element. Mr. Froude in his *Nemesis of Faith*, has this passage:—"I know but one man, who in these modern times has dared to defend eternal punishment on the score of *justice*, and that is Leibnitz; a man who if I know him rightly, chose the subject from its difficulty as an opportunity for the display of his genius, and cared so little for the truth that his conclusions did not cost his heart a pang, or wring a single tear from him. And what does Leibnitz say? That sin, forsooth, though itself only *finite*, yet, because it is against an Infinite Being, contracts a character of infinity, and so must be infinitely punished. It is odd that the clever Leibnitz should not have seen that a *finite punishment* inflicted by the same infinite Being, would itself of course contract the same *character of infinity*. But what trifling all this is! The heart spurns metaphysics, and one good honest feeling tears their shrivelled spider webs to atoms. Now if I am to be a minister of religion, I must teach the poor people that they have a Father in heaven, not a tyrant; one who loves them *all* beyond power of heart to conceive; who is sorry when they do wrong, not angry; whom they are to love and *dread*, not with caitiff, coward fear, but with deepest awe and reverence, as the all-pure, all-good, all-holy. I could never fear a God who kept a hell prison-house. No, not though he flung me there because I refused. There is a power stronger than such a one; and it is possible to walk unscathed even in the burning furnace. What! am I to tell these poor millions of sufferers who struggle on their wretched lives of want and misery, starved into sin, maddened into passion by the fiends of hunger

and privation, in ignorance because they were never taught, and with but enough of knowledge to feel the deep injustice under which they are pining; am I to tell them, I say, that there is no hope for them here, and less than none hereafter; that the grave is but a precipice, off which all, all of them save here one and there one, will fall down into another life to which the worst of earth is heaven? 'Why, why, they may lift up their torn hands and cry in bitter anger, Why, Almighty One, were we ever born at all if it was but for this?'" [Question!]

I submit that that is entirely to the question, that Mr. Grant is bound to consider it—that he is bound to tell us whether this punishment hereafter will be eternal, and tell us how he makes out the humanity or the justice of it. He says the condition is easy, that all people will be saved who happen to be saved, that all will be saved who believe. But my question is, if I cannot believe why should I be damned? Why must my intellect be chained down to your interpretation of Scripture? If there is some special thing you call faith, why don't you declare what it is? Define it, limit it, give it us in its strictest form; let us do what we can with it; but if it appears repugnant to our judgment, let us reject it; and I say it is more honest to say you disbelieve what you do disbelieve, than to profess to believe when you do not. If your God, therefore, respects sincerity—if he respects honesty—if he would leave us free, he will not surely condemn us for our disbelief. If I do what seems to me to be right—if I believe sincerely and honestly, you have no right to damn me, and declare against me an interminable punishment. Show me what I have done wrong; point out to me into what error I have fallen, and if possible I will retrieve it. If I have offended against God or man, let me know how I may expiate it. Surely my finite life has been but short; my offence cannot have reached to heaven. Show me what I can do to expiate my guilt, and I will do it cheerfully and gladly; but you have no right to say that because of that misfortune, of that error which is the result of my ignorance or the strife of passion into which I may have been thrown in this dark and contending state into which we are all plunged—you have no right to say that because I have not been wiser or in more fortunate circumstances therefore I shall be damned without chance of expiation, and that for ever and ever I must suffer. Make your punishment proportionate; give them some measure to the offence; introduce into your judgment some finite element: let us have some relation to our wants, something consonant to our human reason, and following the habits of the age. If our jurisprudence, if our government everywhere has been remodelled upon the

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principle of mercy—if no government attempts any kind of punishment in the way of retaliation or revenge, then the plain issue of the case is this—that eternal punishment is utterly disproportionate to any offence that we can commit; it is an example fatal and immoral to set, and must confuse all our notions of the goodness of God, and demoralize all people who are taught to dwell upon so disheartening a spectacle.

MR. GRANT:—Ladies and Gentlemen, the sentence with which Mr. Holyoake concluded, is the one that he should have maintained in his speech, namely, that this doctrine will "demoralize" those who receive it. The question is, whether it has done anything of the kind, or has any such tendency—whether it is an immoral doctrine, whether mercy from God through Jesus Christ, is immoral in its tendency; whether the death of Christ for the salvation of man is unsatisfactory as a scheme and "immoral as an example." These were the statements of the question in the correspondence. Mr. Holyoake has been again speaking at considerable length upon the doctrine of eternal punishments, instead of upon the doctrine of God's method of mercy, from whatever punishment may come upon men. He declares, that though he will save you by faith—and so he concedes that doctrine;—theirs is a salvation by faith—he declares, that though he will save you by faith, he will not damn you for unbelief. Why, what will he do with you, then? If his system is the heaven unto which you are to get, and you do not believe, and therefore, cannot go there, then where must you be, but in the condition you are in now? And hence your unbelief in that case, as in the heaven the gospel offers you, will exclude you naturally and necessarily. Now, Mr. Holyoake seemed at first to deny, and then again afterwards he asserted, what I expected he would assert, and what I knew he had asserted before, namely, that the doctrine of the atonement in the gospel was to placate or appease the wrath of God, by the death of Christ. I am astonished he should have been so bold as to assert it—for I had so clearly and unequivocally disproved it from that word which we both recognized as the standard in this discussion. He referred to one statement in order to prove some such principle as that—a statement which I do not think he understands, however he may boast of understanding Scripture, namely, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." Now, I apprehend, he is perhaps not the only one who misunderstands that statement. Does Mr. Holyoake imagine that that statement means a moral principle, by which God cannot be merciful without such an atonement, such a sacrifice as shedding of blood? Is that the meaning of the

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passage, think you? I do not now remember perfectly where the passage occurs, but I believe it is in the statement and description of Judaism, in which the apostle was speaking of the different methods in which blood was shed in the Jewish system, and that he describes the whole system, and sums it up by saying, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission" in that system—not laying it down necessarily as a moral principle; and therefore it is inapplicable for Mr. Holyoake to introduce it in this question.

Mr. Holyoake then introduced Leibnitz and Rathbone Gregg. Now, I did think that he would have stated some passages in the New Testament which would have disproved what I asserted about God's providence—that we are not now taught to expect a violation of nature's laws; whereas he quotes, not Jesus Christ, or Paul, or James, or Peter, but Rathbone Gregg. I don't know the gentleman, and I don't believe in him. But then Rathbone Gregg does not answer his end; for he says, according to what I took down from Mr. Holyoake's reading, that the Scripture does teach that by prayer we "modify the Divine procedures." Now, that does not say that we are by prayer to expect a violation of the laws of nature. Mr. Holyoake should not have entered into those questions again, unless he was prepared to enter into them a little more deeply; and he should have taken hold of that one saying of Christ, who is the example, where he refused to "cast himself down," in vain dependence on a violation of material laws, saying, we are never to rush into any such danger madly or rashly. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Until that is answered, Mr. Holyoake should not say anything more upon that question. I did expect this evening that Mr. Holyoake would have proved to you the assertion that he made to me in his correspondence—that the atonement, by the death of Christ, is immoral as an example. I shall show that it is not, though he has not attempted to prove that it is. This is more tangible as an assertion; it does not take us into the cold regions of impossible metaphysics, but states a broad, simple, and obvious mistake. That free-thinkers may so misrepresent the doctrine, as to give us an immoral theory, we do not doubt, and shall prove from their statements; but that the atonement by Jesus Christ is an immoral example, is one of the most dangerous of all the bold statements of men who talk of reason, instead of giving reasons for what they affirm. What do they mean by "immorality?" They say, morals have "guarantees in reason and utility." If "reason" is something opposed to "utility," they cannot both be the basis of morals. If reason and utility are the same, one of the words may be left out, and we have "utility"

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left to represent morality. Then they mean, that the atonement is not only useless—that is, not moral—but injurious—that is, immoral. We look, therefore, for the injury done, by forgiving a man's sins. Is the man injured? He does not think so. Is society injured by him? It is not found so. Are those who believe in it the most prominently, the most injurious persons? Are professing Christians, as a class, the most corrupt and corrupting members of society? Does it morally debase those who constantly rely upon it? Do those who make no professions of reverence for a crucified Saviour, become foremost in condemning and avoiding profligacy, seduction, intemperance, and crime? Are the persons who thus righteously eschew religion, foremost in supporting our innumerable charities, and leading on in every good work? Is not the exact contrary the case? Do you not point with triumph to an inconsistent professor? Inconsistent with what? With this immoral doctrine? A hundred worldlings may live in all wickedness, and it is not remarked; but if any professor should fall, he is a hypocrite, and the sins of the church are recorded by men who keep no book for the sins of the world, because these impartial critics expect nothing from others, but demand propriety, even to prudery, of the professors of immoral doctrines! Then the facts of society are against them, and their own criticisms on professors of Christianity prove that they hold Christians responsible to a severer code of morals than is applied to any others; and therefore facts and results, and their own unwilling concessions, prove that the doctrine is not an immoral one. Surely the systematic teaching of immorality in all pulpits, in every town, ought to have produced other fruits whereas we find that, in any other profession, in any trade, a man may, as thousands do, pass reputably through, with many known spots of dishonour and immorality; but in this teaching of immorality alone do we find, that what will shut up no tradesman's shop, nor any lawyer's office, nor drive respectable society from any private gentleman, will shut the mouth of a preacher, and hurl this professor of immorality from respectability into shame, where he is left without any sympathy from those who, being fifty times more notorious sinners, cannot have fellowship with the man who, having taught the immorality of the pulpit, was consistently ensnared by the immorality of life, and is no worse than nine in ten who pass reputably through the world.

The severe condemnations passed upon hypocritical professors of religion, the stern revenge exercised by worldlings and sceptics towards the failings of the clerical profession, are so many unwilling, ungenerous, but triumphant witnesses, that Christianity does not maintain immorality, in its central doctrine of

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an atonement. With those who speak of "the laws of inexorable fact," this fact, coming within every one's observation, should be a sufficient answer to the aspersion we are considering. What, then, is there in the nature of the doctrine to justify the slander? Or is it, that they have first slandered the doctrine itself, by their general method of misrepresentation, and so have given an odious name to their odious misconception? This latter we have found to be the case; but we may first notice some of those objections which arise from a partial view of the matter. It is represented in various forms in free-thinking literature, that the ease of obtaining forgiveness may prove an incentive to sin. Hence Evans Bell, who, as Mr. Holyoake says, has gone to the East (and therefore we must wait till he comes back to defend what Mr. Holyoake says is "the permanent" standard of secular principles, which Mr. Holyoake has edited, and then sends us after the wise man of the East for an answer)—Evans Bell, in his *Task of To-day*, describes our dangers from an excited populace, in the absence of the restraints from "powerful and enlightened leaders." Then he says, they will "throw off all their religious and human scruples, to plunge into the most revolting horrors and excesses." But he immediately shews, that they need not "throw off religious scruples" for these actions, though he had said they would do so, since he adds, "religion has taught them that all sins can be expiated with penitence and prayer" (*Cabinet of Reason*, vol. i. p. 136). All this is simply an objection to mercy, kindness, and forgiveness, and supposes that men may not be influenced by love; that those who are "forgiven much," will not "love much." But were it ever so true, that this ready forgiveness of sins has a hardening tendency, and encourages wickedness, it would be as much an argument against Atheism, or Secularism, as against the atonement; and let our secular friends not forget this statement; let them fairly try to test its truth. When the Gospel declares a man's sins forgiven through Christ, it does not repeal the laws of society, and so leaves civil duties as firm as before. It does not protect a man from gaol for theft, or from severer punishment for murder, so that, after this forgiveness, men have at least the same reasons for morality as the infidel. Nay, does not the denial of God, and of a future life, the exclusion of the Divine government also, take away the fear of God, and as much, in its way, repeal Divine justice against sin, as the atonement does? Only, infidelity says, You need not repent nor amend; your sins are nothing at all; there is no such thing as sin, because there is no Divine law; no need of repentance, for there is no judge. What, then, are you the better off, as a sanction for morality, if, instead of the doctrine of forgiveness, you take the doctrine of no sin? Is not this

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encouraging enough for vice? It needs no repentance! The Gospel takes away the fear of God, to introduce the love of God; Secularism takes away both love and fear, and so gives no motives for virtue, but only removes one check to vice. They have their atonement, therefore, not kindness to penitents, but the repeal of all Divine law; and this is the only support for morality that is peculiar to Secularists—the absence of a motive; for the other earthly motives, of selfishness and present welfare, are no invention of theirs, but the necessary attendants on our condition, and form the same motive to thieve when convenient, as to be honest when safe and respectable. Yet these consistent philosophers say Christianity must be removed as immoral, for it easily forgives the penitent; and their system is to be adopted as moral, because it makes repentance a farce, and sin a pious fraud. They say the atonement is immoral, because it substitutes mercy for justice, and their new morality is to remove both mercy and justice, and therefore encourage the guilty, whilst they give no principles of gratitude to inspire with a reformatory element. This argument puts them out of court, and proves that even if Christianity *is* as bad as they say, their system is worse in the same respect; and therefore no "benefits would accrue to mankind in general for this life, by removing Christianity and substituting Secularism in its place."

But there is another respect, in which the Secular doctrine is worse than the Secular misrepresentations of the atonement; namely, in the use these writers make of "the doctrine of circumstances," or necessity; leading to non-responsibility; making no action or feeling virtuous or vicious; but simply indifferent because done from "the strongest motive," or from an ill-balanced brain, or wrong training, &c. Every one knows that the leading Socialist doctrine was a denial of moral responsibility; and Mr. Holyoake has not only eulogized Robert Owen here, but indirectly adopted his "formation of character" doctrine, in that speech which declared, that if children turned out ill, they were ill done by; he has avowed it in many forms in *The Reasoner*, besides his rationalism or individualization of Mr. Owen's system, in which he lays down the same principles, and tries to evade them; and begs his readers not to make an immoral, that is a logical use of the doctrine—adopting only its moral side; whilst he will adopt only the immoral side of the doctrine of the atonement. This gross doctrine of physiological necessity, destructive of all moral elements, is thus applied by Mr. Holyoake in extenuation of Mrs. Manning:—"No amount of preceptive teaching would prevent a strong and vicious nature like that of Mrs. Manning from falling before the temptations of vicious circumstances. Such organizations are only to be saved from crime, by being judiciously

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trained and injuriously placed.—*G. J. Holyoake.*"—*Reasoner*, vol. vii. p. 322. This is Arthur Trevelyan's moral doctrine, applied by Mr. Holyoake. In the same volume we have a complete defence of Rush, selected from the *Zoist*, and proceeding on the same principle, in which it is asked, "Why was such a monster, such a monstrous organisation made? Why have we not more intelligent and more virtuous brains? To give a shadow of a reason is impossible: we must be satisfied that it could not be otherwise. From Rush's head we must learn charity. Let every man remember, that if he had such a charge of cunning, acquisitiveness, &c., as Rush was burdened with, &c., he would be a Rush!" (Vol. vii. p. 75, 76.) Mr. Holyoake, who editorially selected this, which coincides with his own theory of Mrs. Manning, praises Arthur Trevelyan's *Insanity of Mankind*, which proves that no man can be sane, because none have perfect brains, and deduces the non-responsibility of man from the ignorant mapping of the skull; and the same editor inserts another explanation of these murders, as originating in Scriptural principles for we are told, "that crime and religion are convertible terms." Are these the men who are to find immorality in the atonement, when their theories of physiological necessity and circumstances obliterate all moral distinctions? The same remarks apply to Mr. Holyoake's article, vol. vi. p. 244, entitled "Defence of Rush," in which Mr. Holyoake insults the poor of this country, by declaring that "so much unemployed poverty amongst the lower orders, is the element out of which criminals are bred;" when it is notorious that this is false of the poor in general, and that inordinate passions and vile principles in such well-to-do men as Rush, Tawell, and Drury, are the occasions of most of the grosser crimes. But for Rush he finds a "defence," declaring that "the murderer is, we fear, already made by society itself." It is true, he adds, "we would in no sense extenuate these fearful offences." This is only insulting the reader, by declaring, as often happens, that he would not do what he is all the while doing. Now, would he have society nurse every man, rock all in cradles, and free all from temptations? For where is "society," after the individuals are thus all dandled in the lap of a sentimental communism; that makes thieves, murderers and assassins the only injured people, and then shrinks with a tender conscience from the immorality of the New Testament? Mr. Holyoake, endorsing an iron fatality, introduces in his *Reasoner*, vol. vii. p. 252, what he calls "a wise prayer," and which he says is "rather an apostrophe than a prayer," and further contradicts himself by saying, it is preserved "because it recognizes those immutable and inexorable laws of nature which make prayer useless." This prayer is as follows:—

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"Spirit of light, life, and power, which was, and is, and ever shall be,—working, diffusing life among all nature, out of the ruins of the past, building up the inscrutable future, which, proceeding by fixed laws, has no sympathies, no affections, which, careless of individual sufferings, presses on," &c. If the atheistic coldness were taken out of this, and we spoke from the depths of our souls in communion with an all-pervading spirit of sympathy and embracing love—if we submitted in resignation to private evils for higher and more general ends, this would give one form of the doctrine of providence; and even in this chilliness of an unloving necessity, Mr. Holyoake exposes his abuse of providence, as he upbraided the absence of private sympathies, and overlooked the general advantage of natural laws in his fated Amazon declamation; whilst this inexorable necessity is, in his hands, equally fatal to morals. Mr. Holyoake, adopting for a motto the saying of Pope, "Whatever is, is right," observes, "The above title I use as most expressive to me of the great feature of this lecture, as being an eloquent historical proof of the famous line in Pope's *Essay on Man*, which declares the rightfulness of necessity."—*Reasoner*, vol. v. p. 455. Mr. Holyoake forgot Pope, when he quoted Shakespeare, or he could have justified the loss of the Amazon, as he may by the same rule justify all actions and destroy all morals; whilst if "whatever is, is right," then the Gospel is right, and nothing is wrong, nor immoral; but all display "the rightfulness of necessity." Mr. Holyoake declared, that virtue consists in following our honest impulses (so I understood him); and Mr. Owen, whom he eulogizes, declares that every impulse is honest, or rather, necessitated and indifferent, and advances a theory which is a handsome apology for the assassin's dagger and the seducer's passions; for he declares, that all man's feelings are as sacred as those of animals, and no less to be concealed—for they are all "the feelings and impulses of nature, which can do no wrong." But this same charity does not cover the clergy and the rich, because it is intended to pander to the ignorant and poor. And this apology for immorality is turned into a most sensitive jealousy for morals, as soon as Christianity is introduced. Freethinkers in general, and Mr. Holyoake in particular, must either abandon and refute all they have taught on morals, or they are in no position to judge the atonement on any such ground. It would be too delicate a question for me to enter into other more definite moral doctrines, endorsed by Mr. Holyoake: I refrain from these, only because of their unsuitableness for discussion in a promiscuous assembly, and content myself on this occasion with exhibiting the anti-moral principles more grossly stated in Socialism, but distinctly avowed in the recognized organs of Secularism. Having shown what is

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truly the satisfactoriness of any scheme, not the absence of speculative difficulties, but the practical adaptation to the felt wants of mankind; and that this adaptation of results is the only satisfaction sought in science, and should therefore satisfy in religion; having proved that the want of satisfactoriness lies in the opponent's scheme of explanation, misrepresenting the revealed relation of God to mankind, we proceeded to inquire into the effects of the doctrine on those who most prominently receive it, and found no immoral result. We then examined the nature of the doctrine, in the partial view of a ready forgiveness of sin, and found that this, besides appealing to the strongest elements in our nature, gratitude and love, which are the reformatory influences sometimes recognised in this discussion by Mr. Holyoake, and forgotten in the right place; besides this, as mere forgiveness, in the extensive sense of repealing divine law, it is level with those who, by denying God, deny sin, and leave no room for either justice or mercy, but whose atonement is being without law to God. We then examined another worse defect in those who question the morality of the atonement, and proved from their writings that they destroy every idea of morality, and find apologies for every wickedness, in a man's brains, or his circumstances: and that therefore their sensitiveness about morals is somewhat suspicious. We shall next prove from the New Testament that the doctrine of atonement by the death of Christ is the secure and revealed basis of Christian morality. We are not now concerned with any metaphysical or theological inquiries, but with the simple question, whether the death of Christ as an atonement is immoral as an example, or in any way, as that doctrine is taught in the New Testament; for this is the book to which all Christians adhere, and which I am here to defend—not Mr. Holyoake's apprehensions or misapprehensions—and to this I shall rigidly confine my argument. Panthea, in a late *Reasoner*, whose article Mr. Holyoake adopted as an attempt to answer an argument in *The Bible and the People*, expressly acknowledges, that whilst "the pervading idea of the New Testament is this, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,' high personal virtues are indeed required of the believer, and it is distinctly asserted (James ii. 17) 'faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone.'" Then this lady, though the most talented and fair writer in the *Reasoner*, proceeds in the next sentence to show that even she misapprehends the subject, by adding, "even James does not hint at the possibility of works without faith being sufficient for salvation." Need we reiterate the philosophy formerly expounded, that without faith there can be no works; that faith, or moral principle, gives the impulse and colouring to all actions; that no

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man works at a business without faith in it? This writer, then, whose defence Mr. Holyoake accepts, unequivocally admits, that the belief in salvation by an atonement, leaves in full force all moral obligations; and on this point the present question turns; not only respecting the morality of salvation, but the efficiency and adaptation of the Gospel to the duties of this life. So far is salvation by faith from diminishing our duties, it increases them, and our ability. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law." That, whose accomplishment law could not secure, because of the obstruction of our frailty, is now to be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, the unaided frailty of man, but after the Spirit of Christ, dwelling in us and destroying our lower tendencies. Christ is "the vine," and we, "the branches," by faithfully abiding in him, are to "bring forth much fruit;" "so shall we be his disciples." "Herein is the Father glorified, as we bring much fruit," "that men seeing our good works may glorify our Father." Even the ransom of Christ is to "redeem us from all iniquity." He "laid down his life for his friends," and they are his friends who do whatsoever he commands. If we call him Master and Lord, we are to obey and imitate him. And is this an immoral example? "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Is this immoral? I will just read one passage, the fourth of Ephesians, from the seventeenth verse. "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ;" who is your lesson; "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." That was a good passage once, when Mr. Holyoake wished to use it against some one. "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good,"—that is, at an honest business,—"that he may have to give to him that needeth." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may

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minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." This is the moral example of Christ. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." And therefore, that is not a kingdom founded on a doctrine of immorality. Here, then, we find not only works after faith, and by faith, but that "the providence of man" was then discovered, that men should live by honest industry, not merely to supply their own wants, but to attend to the wants of others. "I have shown you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that it is more blessed to give than to receive." "And the Lord make you increase and abound in love toward one another and toward all men." There is not much immorality in this doctrine and example, that we should die with Christ to sin, crucify all evil principles, and rise with him to newness of life: putting on as the elect of God feelings of compassion, kindness, humbleness, long-suffering, forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Surely it is not immoral to forgive! And this is the doctrine both of prayer and of the atonement—of prayer, for no man can be accepted of God, according to Christianity, while he is at enmity with his brother-man. "Leave there thy gift before the altar; first go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Every man who prays without this, denies the faith. So that true prayer presupposes all social duties. We pray for forgiveness as we forgive; and the atonement is thus applied: "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; oughtest thou not to have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?" Is this immoral? Does the atonement accept a professed faith, and leave us to deny it by our works, as we neglect social duties? Paul declares, that "if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

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This is the providence and faith of the Gospel, which are asserted not by lip-service, but life-service. Is this distinguishing between "benevolence and belief?" Does it not say, "Show thy faith by thy works?' How, then, can the two be opposed, except as a fountain and its stream? There is another passage, but I do not know whether I shall have time to read it now. [The Umpire stated that Mr. Grant had a minute left.] I find I have only one minute left, and I will not employ it. I am much obliged to you for your attention.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—The little which I shall say concerning the language which you have just heard, shall be compressed into a sentence. Those imputations, which ought never to be made, I think, in public, ought not to be answered; I shall therefore leave it to the good sense and the good feeling of the meeting to determine how far such observations are valid—observations which it would take me far away from this debate to answer, as they might be answered. By the same rule of going from one end of a series of papers, extending over ten or twelve years, by following the same order with regard to the Bible, or anything which Mr. Grant himself has written, I might do as he has done, and give you an impression that would appear to prove anything. The whole of the last night was devoted to explaining to you that theory of morals by which we were disposed to abide, which was our account of the manner in which we thought that good conduct and moral ends might be obtained. We undertook to answer the question, that wherever you propose a moral end to be achieved, we can show that there is a secular path to it; and I was pointing out that the pure by nature are moved by the presence of goodness, that the intelligent are impelled forward by the artistic worship of perfection, and that all orders of men in self-protection are regardful of interest and of virtue through the sentiment of utility. I cited the case of a minister who had changed mere denunciations against mankind to the instruction of them, in which Mr. Barker confessed that, when he came to reason with the people about the certain consequences of ill-doing which ever pursue them in this life, he converted twenty persons where he before converted one, by simply denouncing against them the punishments that might follow hereafter. My theory may be wrong, but no man has a right to accuse us of immorality, when we at least put forward a theory which we believe and which we intend shall answer all the ends of moral government. I have to say that the sense in which Mr. Grant has so elaborately interpreted the term "immoral example" was not the sense which I believe the audience generally would put upon it. There may

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be an immoral doctrine without its immorality being diffused throughout the whole of the character of the persons who may hold it. It does not imply that because a man holds any immoral doctrine, therefore he intends to be immoral himself. I have made no imputation of that kind. It happens to the wisest of us that we are perpetually in the wrong, and in those respects in which we are wrong, certainly we hold immoral principles; while there may be a thousand other more genial influences operating upon us; yet in that respect in which the opinion is wrong, in that respect it is hurtful. That was the meaning I intended to convey, and the meaning which in ordinary language would be understood from what I said. The doctrine of the atonement is an immoral doctrine, that it produces hurtful consequences, more or less. Many may escape from it, but certainly upon some it does operate, and must operate, in the way I have indicated. I shall not, however, disguise my own frequent admissions, that the New Testament contains, what Mr. Grant has read, many excellent, admirable, and moral passages; but does it follow that because it contains those passages, there may not be other doctrines which cannot be justified, and which cannot be defended in the eyes of human reason? And this is the whole of my argument. I have merely singled out that particular doctrine of the utter disproportion of eternal punishment to any possible offence, and said that in that respect it is hurtful and immoral, because it gives us notions of Deity which contradict our ideas of humanity. The Earl of Carlisle said, in a letter to Mrs. Beecher Stowe, that Dr. Channing, of America, was a great and good man. Dr. Channing, you know, was thoroughly capable of stating Christian doctrines with the utmost fairness; and these are his words upon the very doctrine of which I have been speaking:

"This doctrine of an infinite substitute, suffering the penalty of sin, to manifest God's wrath against sin, and thus to support his government, is, I fear, so familiar to us all, that its monstrous character is overlooked. Let me, then, set it before you in new terms. . . . Suppose, then, that a teacher should come among you, and should tell you that the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, had erected a gallows in the centre of the universe, and had publicly executed upon it, in room of the offenders, an Infinite Being, the partaker of his own supreme Divinity . . . that all beings in heaven and earth are required to fix their eyes on this fearful sight as the most powerful enforcement of obedience and virtue, would you not tell him that he calumniated his Maker? . . . That the spirit of a government, whose very act of pardon were written in human blood, was terror, not paternal love,

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and that the obedience which needeth to be upheld by this horrid spectacle is nothing worth?"

That is the language of Dr. Channing, which paints the doctrine precisely as I represented it, as being a libel upon the character of the Creator himself, as well as a hurtful example to present to us; and I shall show you on the next evening, by referring to the passages which Mr. Grant has been repeating of the love of the Saviour, that the very sentiment of love which you applaud for its morality, absolutely and flatly contradicts this very doctrine itself. I will then make good my assertion, that the New Testament contains two Christs—Christ the gentle, and Christ the austere—and that you quote one against the other, to the confusion of the public, and to the prevention of any right understanding upon this subject. I will give you an instance why I consider this doctrine hurtful. An article recently appeared, entitled, "Cold-blooded Homicide," from the pen of Elihu Burritt; and it has this singular passage against death-punishments:—"Among other customs of a dark antiquity which have dared to cross that rubicon of time, the cross-crowned summit of Calvary, and, to come down hand in hand with the institutions of Christianity, coldblooded, deliberate, legal homicide on the gallows, is now arraigned at the bar of public opinion, as diametrically opposed to *revelation*, reason, *religion*, and humanity." But how can you use that sort of argument against death punishments? How can you tell our rulers, how can you tell an angry man that he ought to forgive his brother who has offended against him, while you state, as the highest instance upon record, that God spared not his own Son that dreadful death? While you appeal, as I grant you do frequently, to the humanity of the people, you perpetually confuse the integrity of this teaching, by presenting other examples, not to be reconciled either with reason or humanity. Mr. Mirill, to whom I will refer again, because he has stated his case everywhere with singular fairness, said, in a lecture delivered some time ago in the City of London Tavern, "I look upon it as evidence of the original grandeur of our kind, however overgrown it may be with infirmities and corruptions, however accidentally debased, that man's will can never be effectually governed but through his affections; that mere *authority* can never bind him to good; that to all that is worthy of his pursuit, all that would elevate, purify, ennoble him, he must be *led*, he cannot be *driven*; he must plod his own way, assisted or unassisted; he cannot be taken; he must himself be *the prime agent*, he cannot be the *passive subject*. You are no more able to fashion *him*, however you may fashion his

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external conduct, by the force of law, than you can change the nature of the lower animals by constant discipline. His inner self will mock your authority, even whilst his outward act does homage to it; and in revenge of every attempt to overbear its independence, will cling all closer to the objects it is commanded to surrender." Now in that emphatic passage, which is the history of the conduct of humanity, we are told that if men are to be governed and controlled, it must be through their affections; we know very well that if you appeal to men's intelligence, and put them under the dominion of an idea, then you govern them rightfully, and they are the willing servants of their convictions. Now, is it an unreasonable thing if you say, this doctrine of eternal punishment appeals to our human reason—there is no audacity, there is no presumption, I trust there is no profanity in my speaking thus—if it is to appeal to our human reason, we have a right to expect that this doctrine shall accord with our own notion of human government. Why, then, should not the scheme of salvation be addressed simply to our understanding and our affections, based upon good works, and not upon arbitrary faith? Why should we not be led instead of being driven? Why should we be menaced with the tremendous consequences of eternal punishment, when all that is needful is that you address successfully the understanding? The parent knows that it is at once a disgrace to himself and a misfortune to his child, if he ever have occasion to use coercion—it is because he is not wise enough to make his child clearly perceive the direction which he should follow; for there are none of us who, if we saw clearly the right path put before us, would not take it instinctively, because it would be seen to be the best path on the whole that could possibly be taken, and the most attractive? For, as I said the other evening, when speaking of morality, the path of virtue has full as much attraction as personal beauty itself. We need a higher development—in fact, we can only be led in that manner: and the doctrine that would coerce and menace us with terror contradicts our own notions of right and wrong. No man would do by his friend, no parent would do by his child, what it is said God would do by his erring children. Whatever might happen, there is no father or mother who could consign a child for one moment to the torture of flames; and how can you tell us that the God of love will do this for ever without outraging our common humanity? It is there I find its immorality. You say the Gods are objects of our admiration—that we are to have them perpetually before us; but if their conduct does not coincide with ours—if God himself is not the enlargement of man's nature in all its best and holiest attributes—if every time I look upon him I have to contemplate a character

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which I cannot explain, which you cannot defend, which none here will attempt to defend—how can you say I am instructed? how can you say I am improved? How can I be refined, when you tell me one day to be forgiving to my neighbour, to be forgiving even to my enemy, to bless them that hate me; and yet tell me that God himself will damn me for no other cause than that I happen to differ from you? Chevalier Bunsen, who is certainly an authority among Christians, has written these words in the last book which he has published: "Either Christianity is true, or it is not true; the Scriptures either contain the word of God to mankind, or they do not contain it; Christ either spoke the truth, or he did not speak it. Now, if Christianity be not true, what authority in the world can make it true? But if it be true, it is true because true in itself, and wants no authority whatever to make it true. If the Gospels contain inspired wisdom, they must themselves inspire with heavenly thoughts the conscientious inquirer and the serious thinker; let them, therefore, freely be made the object of inquiry and of thought. Scripture, to be believed true, with a full conviction, must be at one—*consonant—with reason.*" It is because it seems not consonant with reason in these respects that I am obliged to make objections to it. This is the ground on which we ask to have this doctrine considered.

Mr. Grant comes into this controversy, I understood, to answer certain objections that one has to put forward, and to consider what was the reason why I was unable to accept his various doctrines. I want to find in the Scriptures that which is consonant with my every-day life. I will only add, as I find that my time is expired, that I have never joined with persons who have made objections to various forms of Christianity because they are not scriptural. The doctrine which Mr. Grant preaches about this eternal punishment is unquestionably perfectly scriptural. Though he has not told you what it is, though he has not denied my opinions, yet when he comes to tell you his, he will be obliged to say that these things unfortunately are written in the Scriptures. That, then, is why I am not able to believe them. I would gladly avail myself of the great power of the Christian name, and the passport which it would give me; but simple honesty forbids me to use as an authority a book which contradicts, in my opinion, the holiest feelings of the heart.

Mr. Grant.—Mr. Holyoake persists in speaking of arbitrary faith in opposition to good works, when he has been taught as clearly as sunshine, that faith is the foundation of good works. He continues to represent the question we are debating as the doctrine of eternal punishment, instead of the atonement by Jesus

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Christ. He continues to mistake the difference between God as a universal moral Governor and those private feelings which belong to us as individuals. He seems to charge upon the magistrate ferocity, because he sends the criminal to prison, and to imagine that this is a spirit and character in which he is not to be imitated. If he cannot define the difference between a magistrate's private character and his relation to those who injure him, and the magistrate's relation to the laws of the country, he is not prepared to enter into this question. I shall leave what has been said on the subject of the atonement on both sides, to stand by the side of one another—of which I am not at all afraid—only stating here one thing, that in the correspondence I had with Mr. Holyoake, it was arranged, that I was to have an hour instead of half an hour in my first speech; consequently, I have had less time than I anticipated. If Mr. Holyoake, instead of entering into further questions, would add two nights to the end of this debate, to prove the propositions he has affirmed, I should be happy. The great danger of all discussions is, lest they should tend to confusion of thought, by the introduction of foreign subjects: it is my duty to see that none can mistake the questions at issue. The secretary of the Secular Society at Leicester sent to request that I would meet Mr. Holyoake, and in reply I proposed this topic: "What would be gained by mankind in general, and the working classes in particular, as to this life, by the removal of Christianity, and the substitution of Atheism in its place? In other words, wherein consists the superiority of the Atheists' gospel over the Gospel of Jesus Christ?" Mr. Holyoake now declares, that the first part of the proposal is explained away by the second; as if he had adopted the second, that would have been explained away by the first. Another form of evasion is, that the proposition originated with me, though he did mend it, and praise it, and take it: but since all propositions must originate with one or other party, the other side can always say, "It did not originate with me." Mr. H. wrote to say—"The first proposition you name as the subject of our debate, strikes me upon the first reading to be a useful one, with the change of one word." Here he distinguishes the proposition he chose, from the explanation he now prefers, for he left out and repudiated that explanation as avowing Atheism, and he thus proceeds: "The proposition would then stand as follows, 'What would be gained by mankind in general, or the working classes in particular, as to this life, by the removal of Christianity and substituting Secularism in its place?'" If the second proposition was the best explanation of the words he adopted and modified, why did he choose the first and reject the second? and if now he repudiates Atheism, how can he now

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prefer this statement, "the superiority of the (abandoned) Atheistic gospel to that of Jesus Christ?" And what would he gain by this change, except the clearer proclamation of the fact, that Secularism means evasion? for he, by professing his Atheistic gospel (which he dare not avow) to be superior to that of Jesus Christ, would both display unaccountable modesty, and still indirectly propose to remove the inferior for the superior, which he is willing enough to aim at, but not open enough here candidly to profess. But now he will set up "a coalition ministry," and join me to tell his followers that Christianity need not be removed. He will join Charles Southwell's Eclectic School, and select the good parts of Christianity as the moral remains of the Bible; but he will not evade its Divine claims by presenting the Redeemer with a reed sceptre.

Instead of shewing a better system, he will take the good out of this, and make Christianity his debtor. The Gospel repudiates such patronage; men may accept it if they like, or reject it if they like, and, as in every other case, venture the consequences. The Gospel is as independent as we are; the whole matter is our own affair. But now Mr. Holyoake promised to shew me "a statement of these advantages which Secularism confers, and which Christianity opposes." Has he maintained any such advantages? What good thing has he mentioned that Christianity opposes? He has quoted a few passages and misapplied them all. "Be content with such things as ye have," he interprets into not bettering our condition. It would be an insult to your understandings to explain that it means nothing of the kind. He takes odd phrases out of their application and makes them absolute; he does not compare Scripture with Scripture, except vainly to invalidate social duties. He does not quote Paul to slaves, "If thou mayest be free, use it rather"—that is, better your condition if you can, submit in heroic patience if you cannot. It would be idle to expose the perversions and one-sidedness of Mr. Holyoake's quotations of Scripture; the main thing is to keep him to the proposition he accepted and modified—to make him justify or abandon his praise of the *Cabinet of Reason* as "the authorized and permanent" statement of Secularism, instead of sending us after the wise men of the East, whose work he edited, whose views he adopted, and in the *Reasoner*, distinctly declares them to be "the permanent standard" of Secularism; but now he here repudiates it on this platform. In the first volume, the only object is to prove that Christianity is an obstruction, and must be removed, before any progress can be made. Mr. Holyoake knows this as well as I do, though he does not know it better, for I should be sorry to be as unacquainted with Secularism, as he

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would by his statements appear to be with Christianity. Let him then fairly prove his position, or honourably abandon it, and not travel along that street in which the Secularists are described to have held a meeting, "Turnagain Lane." Let us be straightforward, and not juggle with terms, to confuse those whom we ought to teach. I am here to inquire what benefits Christianity opposes, and Mr. Holyoake was here to show these benefits. Instead of this, he shows that he cannot afford either to represent Christianity properly, or to maintain a theme he chose, and debated in a long correspondence, to abandon on this platform. The main question is, what Mr. Holyoake can substitute as better for men than the Gospel of Christ; and he answers it by stealing the practical duties which Christianity founds on its spiritual principles. We have not to decide whether there be wrong things done by professing Christians, who in all wrong things, and in all hypocrisy, are Infidels, ignorers of Christ; the question is not whether there be evils in society—not whether the name of religion is perverted to wrong political purposes, but whether any of those evils are upheld by Christianity, and whether Secularism, which is a cloud driven of the wind, would remove those evils and introduce anything really useful; whether we have all waited till now, for carriages, ships, houses, clothes, food, commerce; and lived on thin air, till Mr. Holyoake discovered the importance of science, which he has not mastered, and would have to learn from a Christian author; whether they have just found out nature and the importance of this life, before the last man died in a vain dependence on spiritual aid; or whether they do not dream about imaginary evils, and only add to real ones: whether they have not changed their track, to talk about into some more plausible dogmas, and catch at straws to prevent the inevitable fate of their poor pretensions; whether they are not tricked out and garnished with the spoils of Christianity, to clothe and galvanize into the appearance of life, the dead corpse of a material philosophy: whether they have not hidden their baffled attacks on the spiritual elements of Christianity, in the patronage of its practical results: whether their defence is not evasion, and their onset misrepresentation, and their special providence in the unacquaintedness of their followers with the religion they abuse: whether out of a denial of another life, or the pitiful opening and shutting of the question of a God, the darting from Atheism to Non-theism, saying, half-saying, and unsaying, they can create any moral truth, or enforce any social duty, and prove out of their peculiar principles, that because there is no Father in heaven we are all brothers on earth; whether they are to cheat us with the promise of social changes which they dare not openly name, as

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the corollary of Infidel negations which they forsake, and in opposition to that religion which alone has produced any general social welfare: whether we are to be mocked by the vague pretensions of men about "the positive side" of what is not only all negative, but is itself denied or held in the dark by the pretenders themselves: whether they who mend nothing, and break everything, and have studied no science but fault-finding, are likely to regenerate the world: whether because when they look at the sun and become dazzled, thinking the weakness of their eyes a defect in his splendour, this should turn us from using the sun for its proper object, to see what it shines upon, and go to our daily labour under the guidance of those principles whose speculative difficulties are solved in their practical application, as we do the will of our Father, and feel the truth of his word. And if Mr. Holyoake fail to prove (as he has failed, and will fail), that existing evils in nature or society come from the New Testament—if he fail to prove that Christianity carried out is not beneficial in its tendency—if he omit to notice that every material calamity is from the nature he praises, and every social evil springs from the Secular principles of that human nature which he describes as inherently good—if we find in Christianity an alleviation and correction of those evils, whether in the inevitable course of his destiny-doctrine of nature, or the historical development of human character—then all his ability is perverted to a vain enterprise. He does nothing to the purpose of this debate if he does not propose something definite, prove it is a real benefit, that it comes from his abandoned negations, that it is not contained in Christianity, and that it is opposed by Christianity. But he will not take up these logical requisites, and fulfil them one by one; he will only say that "if this is the sort of opposition he is to meet" he had better go on with more confident assertions. Every Christian working-man going to his daily labour, is a practical refutation of Mr. Holyoake's own particular and original notion of a special providence, and an exemplification of Christian precepts, "Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" by both, in which the diligence in business has "the precedence in time," of which Mr. Holyoake is so enamoured. The three Secular benefits being thus invalidated, we are treated to one good thing which Christianity obstructs, namely, that Solomon says, "He that spares the rod spoils the child;" whereas, Secularism introduces love; as if Christianity repudiated love, instead of saying "God is love," and "he that loveth not, knoweth not God." I am afraid, logically speaking, that Solomon's "rod" is for their own back. Do they suppose that "rod" means merely physical punishment, and not the kindly severity of discipline

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which they express under the term nature and "deity?" When Paul inquired, "Shall I come with a rod or in love?" was he speaking as a pedagogue to school-boys, as Mr. Holyoake here treats us with a nursery tale, as a royal road to knowledge? When the schoolmaster is abroad, he may settle these points, and no one would refer to them in this debate, who was not all abroad himself. The Secular schoolmasters are in no position to educate others, since they never remember their lesson long, and therefore have need to go to school again; for if Solomon's saying be true, the rod was spared when they were children. All Christians rally round one book, own one Master, and have done for two thousand years; they will for two thousand more, and increase in numbers every day; but one single sect has had the *New Moral World* superseded by the *Oracle*, which was worked for a few minutes, to be superseded by the *Movement*, *Investigator*, and *Reasoner*, which proposes and abandons the *Cabinet of Reason*. The *Skirmisher*, quoted by Mr. Holyoake, mentions some of the names now assumed by various parties. The Editor might find more names that had in succession been supported by the present Secular leader: he gives Socialists, Rationalists, Philansterians, Decentralization, Individualism, Positivism, and Holyoake's Secularism; to which Mr. Holyoake appends this note in vol. xiii. p. 51.—"What Mr. Holyoake asks is, that contending sects should find the common ground on which all could work for humanity." These common terms hide Mr. Holyoake's ideas, for by "humanity" he means the body; by "humanity" we mean the soul as well. But if there be "a common ground" for all sects, why does he contend against these sects, and against his own past notions, and call Christians "Mrs. Gamps," when they work for humanity? Every addition to confusion, begins with objecting to "contending sects," even though it is the least sect; and the most sectarian, are they who sneer at sects. If all would agree with them, there would be no difference. They are for this sort of union, which they call "common ground," the catholic profession of the narrow-minded and illiberal. But if his ground is common to all others, then he "carries coals to Newcastle;" for every sect has the ground he calls his own, so that he possesses only a common truth which everybody follows, and has only added a few ephemeral errors of his own: and calls for a magician's wand to sink the sea, and destroy all other vessels, to keep his own from foundering. This spiritual dependence will not save the Secular craft; for it is a law of nature, deduced from history, that every scheme with which Mr. Holyoake is peculiarly associated, fails most completely, in spite of Miranda's prayers and protestations;

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and however much he may desire, like Jonah, to preserve his own gourd at the expense of Nineveh, that great city, or of the nations on the sea, his own ephemeral schemes do keep perishing, and God's providence preserves and advances the human race, making calamities and follies contribute to human science, industry, carefulness, and welfare.

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THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 17TH, 1853.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—As I have to open this discussion each night, by Mr. Grant's own proposal, I take it to be his duty to follow me as I should follow him, if he took the lead. I say this, because the variety of extracts which he reads upon very different subjects would occupy me all my time, if I followed them as they might be followed, and as they might be answered. As the *Reasoner* volumes, to which he chiefly refers, are mostly out of print, not one person in five hundred who will read the report of these speeches will ever know how different from Mr. Grant's representations are the passages which he quotes. Could each person make the references Mr. Grant gives, I would not occupy one moment in referring to them; as it is, I shall do it most briefly. A reference was made to the writings of Mr. Trevelyan: whoever looks into them will find them quite as instructive, and much more moral, than the "Three Shams" of Mr. Grant, or the "Swallow-well Family." It was said that I extenuated the Mannings; but what Mr. Grant himself read, disproved the assertion. It was said that the *Reasoner* presented "a complete defence of Rush." This was not anything of our own, but a quotation of a medical article from the *Zoist*, from the pen of one of our first physiologists. Will you believe that that "complete defence" ended in this resolute and just sentiment:—"Let us detest such organizations [as Rush's]; let us detest it as we detest the organization called wolf, tiger, rattlesnake, scorpion, or vermin; and let us defend ourselves and others from them by all means which are absolutely necessary, and as little cruel as possible." Now, I calculate that either as criminal or clergyman, Mr. Grant would feel very little flattered by such a "complete defence" of himself. But Dr. Elliotson adds, "Let us pity the individual; for he did not make himself, no, not a hair of his head" (*Zoist*, No. 26; *Reasoner*, 126). It was said, that what had been asserted in this discussion, as being my social views, I had asserted upon oath. This is in no sense true. What I asserted on oath was, that "Mr. Owen's system consisted in

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finding a situation in which it shall be impossible for man to be depraved or poor; and, in doing this, by supplying the material conditions of human development;" and that was all I said upon the subject. And this is an answer to all the allegations that we extenuate murder, or apologize for sin. Our disposition is to put them both down with a strong hand. In the course of the evening, Mr. Grant made this statement: "It would be too delicate a question for me to enter into other more definite moral doctrines indorsed by Mr. Holyoake. I refrain from these only because of their unsuitableness for discussion in a promiscuous assembly." Mark, he does not venture to say that these doctrines are my own, but that I indorse some such doctrines of others. Now, I utterly deny this. I may indorse doctrines which Mr. Grant deems immoral, and he indorses doctrines which I deem immoral; and I have just as much right to say that of him, as he has to say it of me. The regulation of time, in this debate, of which Mr. Grant affected to complain, was made by the committees of arrangement, and not by myself; and so far from Mr. Grant suffering, he boasted the other night to his congregation in Birmingham, that he spoke so fast, that he should have two-thirds of the entire report to himself. The two wood-cut blocks of Satan, accompanied by the remarks with which we introduce them to the public, and which explain our object in using them, I now hand to Mr. Grant's chairman, to appear in the report of Mr. Grant's speech, according to his own request. [Mr. Holyoake here handed the blocks to the chairman.] It is a common thing to accuse us of wanting reverential feelings in approaching sacred subjects; but after the display of levity and bitterness which last evening Mr. Grant threw into the treatment of the most solemn subject which can engage the Christian's consideration, I presume that the censures of serious men will in future not fall entirely upon my side. The only defence of eternal punishment which I heard was, that by reference to the civil magistrates, whom, it was argued, we do not charge with ferocity, notwithstanding the sometimes severity of their sentences. It was, however, overlooked, that the magistrate merely administers the law of society in self-defence. But what would be said if the magistrate were all-mighty and all-wise, and had made the criminal whom he condemned, and placed him in a world where he foreknew that he would be tempted, and left him with a nature which he foreknew would fall? Moral indignation would rise up then against such a judge. Mr. Grant's analogy made the matter worse, as will all the analogies he will be able to find. It was argued, that we had nothing to do with the scheme of salvation, but to note the result. If so, the Scriptures should not have given

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us the particulars of that plan. If I am wrong in examining the "scheme of salvation," how came Mr. Grant to propose to discuss the "method of God's mercy to sinners?" What is the difference between the "scheme" of salvation, and the "method" of salvation? We were told, we have nothing to do with a lock, except to turn the key, and note the effect. But I answer, God is not a locksmith, and the doctrine of salvation ought to be something higher than a machine for baffling thieves. It ought to carry with it rational explicitness, or it is no better than heathen mythology; it ought to carry with it moral instruction, or it is of no worth. All discussions, therefore, as to the growth of grass and trees, and the structure of steam-engines and telegraphs, are beside the question. But I did argue the question narrowed to Mr. Grant's point. I took the results of the mere blind fact, and showed that eternal punishments, the central fact of the theory of the atonement, are morally confusing and demoralizing.

The subject of this evening is one I should not have introduced; but Mr. Grant professed, in our correspondence, such anxiety that our religions should come into collision, and to meet his views, I named the proposition of this night, namely, "the example of Christ, and the teachings of the New Testament"—the first unsuitable for imitation; the second unsuitable for guidance, except on the principle of arbitrary selection. Mr. Grant stands here to maintain, that the whole Scriptures were inspired by God; that we cannot disbelieve any part, without danger of eternal damnation. I, on the other hand, am going to argue, that we ought to be free to make an Eclecticism of the Scriptures—that is, to select those parts which are wise and noble, and disbelieve those which are uninstructive or misleading. Mr. Grant, however, says, "You shall take all or none." In that intolerant spirit which has been discarded in philosophy and politics as the disgrace of liberal minds, he is resolved to force us to accept the "six points" of his religious Chartism, whether we will or not.

It shall be no part of my plan to dwell upon the general disqualification of Scripture for moral guidance; but when I remember the severity and harshness of imputation practised towards us, with respect to what are falsely designated "the loose, immoral notions of sceptics," I am constrained to say, that the Bible is not a book which entitles Christians to assume this tone towards us. The Bible is a disqualified book, by the nature of many of its narratives—disqualified for the perusal of children, disqualified for the family table. I have in my possession a copy of the Bible, which was once imprisoned for six weeks for blasphemy. It was presented by Mr. Trevelyan to Mr. Finlay, of Edinburgh.

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It occurred to Mr. Finlay to place it at his door, opened at certain parts. There was no word of comment, no perversions, no misquotations, no separations from context; the pages were simply opened, and for this Mr. Finlay and the Bible were seized, and both imprisoned for six weeks. It is a favourite defence of the Bible to say, that bad men would not have written it, and that good men could not, unless it were all true. We say, there are parts of it which bad men might have written, and parts which good men would not. I readily admit that Christians, as a body, set their faces honestly and stedfastly against what they conceive to be licentious; yet this does not alter the fact, that there are passages in the Scriptures which would be prosecuted if we produced them—passages for which, were you to find them in any books of ours, you would attempt to hoot us from society. You ought, therefore, at least to judge us by the same measure that you wish to be meted out to you. The point, however, in the example of Christ which I select for discussion to-night, shall merely be his language to his opponents. Mind, there are great features in the life of Christ, which I admit to be very noble. I am not going to deny these, or even keep them out of sight, but to argue that some points are open to objection, both in the example of Christ and of his apostles. Did not Christ call his opponents, the Scribes and Pharisees, "fools," "hypocrites," "serpents," and "a generation of vipers?" and yet these men were not wholly bad. Christ said, "Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do ye not after their works." It is clear that, at least, therefore, these men gave good advice. Did not Paul say, "Whoever preaches another Gospel than mine, let him be accursed;" and that such a one was "proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words?" Did not John say, that he who denied that Jesus is the Christ, is a liar? Now, this language, gentlemen, is not true, and not useful even if it were true. It is not probable that *all* the Scribes and Pharisees were bad. We never find any body of men who are wholly bad. Some are always well-intending, though misled or miseducated. Therefore the wholesale denunciation of them was bad. If the apostles had a right to use the language they did towards their religious opponents, no language can be deemed bad, nor can any rudeness in controversy ever be condemned. When I was imprisoned in Gloucester Gaol for an honest answer to a Christian preacher, two Christian magistrates (Mr. Bransby Cooper and the Rev. Samuel Jones) denounced me as a "fool" several times. As I complained of this to the judge, Mr. Jones came one day and read to me, from the writings of the Psalmist, these words, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." "You see," added Mr.

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Jones, "that David calls you a fool." I answered, "I no more like rudeness in the mouth of David, than I do in the mouth of a magistrate;" and this answer I give to all who justify acerbity by quoting Scripture. These epithets, used by Christian writers, have been the source of much of the bad spirit and bad language which has poisoned all controversy, and so often ruined the advocacy of working men. The politics of the poor have failed more from this cause than from any other. Because Christ spoke out against those whom he considered hypocrites, the poor man thought he might do it also. Misled by his example in this respect, they did not pause to notice, that you cannot reform men by denunciation. Christ did not instruct, he only irritated the Scribes and Pharisees, by this violence of language. "Epithets," as *The Times* lately wisely said, "only inflame the passions," and improvement never comes in that way; but because Christ did it, the poor man concludes that it must be right. To deny the sincerity of your opponent, and to impute evil motives to him, is the easiest, the commonest, the lowest, the vulgarest mode of advocacy. Words must not only be true, they must also be useful. Out of all that is true, we must endeavour to say that only which shall effect the instruction and the improvement of our adversaries. This is the highest law of language; and if all men, who in haste or anger think evilly of others, were to occupy the public in giving vent to their indignation, all society would be involved in the most disgraceful recrimination, and we should never more hear anything but a never-ending Babal of the coarsest epithets. Calm discussion, or friendly intercourse, would be impossible. This is my argument. When Christ addressed the Pharisees and Scribes, he called them "fools" and "hypocrites;" when he met Judas, as he came to betray him with his traitorous kiss, Christ turned to him and said, with a noble simplicity, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Now, Christ knew that Judas had come to betray him. Here, indeed, was an occasion for denunciation which philosophy itself might excuse. Yet Christ, with a majestic moderation, simply said, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Now, I demand to know, which parts of Christ's example am I to follow? —the coarse epithets which every vulgar nature may reproduce, or that sublime courtesy which only noble natures can manifest?

The next aspect in which the Scriptures are objectionable, as a whole, is that in which they inculcate and justify persecution. Does not John say, "He that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him?" If you once persuade the public that the wrath of God abides on the conscientious unbeliever, you will soon find that the wrath of man, in bitter imitation, is laid there also. Throughout the New Testament,

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unbelief implies guilt. It appears to have been the opinion of the apostles, as manifested in their own treatment of the heretics of their day. Paul, speaking of some who give heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, calls them unruly men and vain talkers and deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped. He himself distinctly commands even harsher measures towards the very holiest Dissenter that can be conceived of; for he says, "Though an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." You never can use this language, without justifying immediately the worst forms of persecution on the part of all who believe it. Again, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an Infidel? If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railing, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself." Thus far Paul, in illustration of the charity that thinketh no evil. Now turn to the gentler John, the beloved disciple, and listen to his instructions upon the same subject: "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also"—a definition of piety which would exclude the purest and holiest Theists of all ages and countries, while it specially includes all the impious kings, priests, and soldiers who have laid waste kingdoms in the name of Christ. Again: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist. Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed, is a partaker of his evil deeds." Lastly, "Hereby we know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God,

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heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." Now, after these admonitions from the chiefest of apostles, can we be mistaken in regarding similar conduct in the present day as authorised by Christianity? In vain may Paul occasionally utter generous sentiments on this subject, and declare, in the noblest terms, that charity is greater than faith; while he can so frequently forget charity in the strife for faith, his example is an inconsistent one. In vain may John declare, that "he that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even till now," if he can call his brother "a liar" and a "deceiver," and refuses to receive him into his house, simply because he cannot take the same view of Christian doctrine. This argument may be found set forth much more at length by "Panthea," in No. 345 of the *Reasoner*. I have cited it here briefly, for the purpose of showing, that every Christian who is courteous and kind to opponents, must make a selection of one part of Scripture, and disregard the other. Again, I demand to know, which parts of the New Testament I am to be bound by. I cannot follow them all. I cannot follow the injunction, "Love thy enemies," at the same time that I call my friend, who differs from me, a liar, and declare him to be accursed. No form of language can persuade me that I love my neighbour as myself, while I turn him from my doors because of his difference of opinion. Again, I demand to know whom am I to believe—Christ, or Paul, or John? I cannot believe in all, in every respect. I cite only one example (the *Evangelical Magazine* lately had this passage), which will show you that Evangelical Christians, who guide others, take the same view as that which I have taken in these passages. Speaking of myself and my friends, they said, "If there are those unhappy beings, whose idiosyncracies, or whose *career of wickedness*, have brought them to say, with the fool, 'There is no God,' we cannot persuade ourselves that it is any unjustifiable curtailment of liberty for a government to say, 'You shall keep your mischievous notions to yourselves; you shall not be permitted to publish your God-denying theories, and thus to minister to the subversion of all authority, human and divine. All liberty is based on certain great restraints upon the *disorderly and corrupt* propensities of human nature, and we know of no propensity more *vicious*, than for a man to disbelieve that he is a creature of God, and to endeavour, from the press and from the platform, to teach others to think with him. To restrain such a man within certain limits, is no more an assault on liberty, than to *watch pickpockets*, and to cage them up whenever they are found indulging their vocation." You will find unfortunately that that spirit pervades the great majority of devout

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Christians in this country, more or less, at one time or other; and I put the fact forth here, because if such passages (as I have cited) are to be accepted, if every devout believer of the Scriptures is bound to take them and to follow them out, there is an end to all your declarations that Christianity is not a persecuting system. There are parts which contradict all those statements; there are parts which breathe friendliness, and kindness, and generosity even to our enemies. I want to know which I am to take; I want to know, if you say I am to take both, how you can reconcile both together. I want Mr. Grant to point this out. I hope he will think, at least this night, that this is to the point. I hope he will think that I have a right to speak to these passages. I hope he will agree that he is bound to reconcile these, or give me an authority to take those which will instruct me, and avoid those which will deprave me. I have a right to ask, that everywhere in this country we shall no longer be represented as preaching doctrines injurious to mankind. I hope we shall no longer, on account of our difference of opinion, be liable to be treated in that manner, because we are not able to believe as you believe, and hold doctrines to which you subscribe. It does appear to me that we ought to be held perfectly free; and there are innumerable passages, which, if time permits, I shall draw Mr. Grant's attention to, for the purpose of knowing which I am to take—they are so morally contradictory. And here is my confusion and my difficulty. If I could believe the whole of the Scriptures, I should be willing to do so; but when Mr. Grant says to me, "No, you are to believe all or none," you may depend upon it I will take him at his word, and I shall believe none. I have only to add, that when I am told the peril is mine if I reject them, I make you this plain answer—The peril is mine if I receive them.

MR. GRANT:—Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I shall need your careful attention this evening, as you will easily perceive from my voice, that I am not quite free from a severe cold, to which I have been subject for a week. Mr. Holyoake is much stronger in the *Evangelical Magazine* than in the New Testament. That is not my New Testament, and I have nothing to do with any statement of that kind. He will not believe anything now in the Bible, he says; and yet he says there are some good things in it too: I suppose he will take these at any rate! Now, the whole view that Mr. Holyoake has given you of the relation of the Apostle Paul, and the apostles generally, to Christian teachers, is, I apprehend, rather a mistaken one; and he will see himself that his difficulty in this respect is removed, if he will look carefully at what I say. The Apostle Paul never took away any man's liberty

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to think for himself. He says, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good;" but as an apostle, and therefore as the authorized teacher of Christianity, he did repudiate those who, pretending to be Christian teachers, contradicted what Paul knew to be the Christian system. Now, Mr. Holyoake does just the very same thing; for he has just now proposed that there shall be a board of examiners, to see that the Secular lecturers are really orthodox in their creed, and has recommended that one of them shall receive the passage of the Apostle John, "Receive him not into your house, neither bid him good speed," because he will not do you any credit. Now, this is the exact position of Mr. Holyoake towards Secularism—the position which the Apostle Paul took towards Christianity. I shall be able afterwards to refer him to the exact place. The person I refer to now is Mr. Broom, of Bradford; and the case to which I refer is,—some have left them, and then they are not quite so free as they seemed to be when they were with them, and are pursued in a method not worthy of the professions on this platform; and then Mr. Holyoake says, "We must take care whom we adopt and recognize; it is your own fault if you have trusted these men; wait till we have a board of examiners, then we will take a Paul's method, and a John's method, and say, 'Receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed;' for he won't do for you." Mr. Holyoake referred to some passages in the Bible, which would not be satisfactory for public reading: allow me to state, in reference to these, that he must of course refer to the Old Testament. Now, he agreed with me to confine his observations to the New Testament; and allow me to state, in reference to these passages in the Old Testament, that there are things appear in *The Times* newspaper which would not look very well for common reading, and yet never can be charged upon the editor as the principles of the leading article—these are the police reports. And so God has his police reports in the Scriptures. [Interruption, laughter, and cries of Oh! oh!]

MR. SYME:—I hope the audience will be quiet, and allow Mr Grant to go on.

MR. GRANT:—So in the Bible there are reports of evil actions, that are condemned while they are reported. But the principles to which I referred, and which I shall prove before I sit down, about Mr. Holyoake's teaching, are not the police reports, but they are the cabinet measures of his own government. Mr. Holyoake has learned now that the *Reasoner* is out of print. Why did he not

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say so when he sent me to the *Reasoner* to find his principles? I do not understand quite on what principle we are to "detest the organization" of any man; and if the man is his organization, how you can detest his organization and not detest him? Mr. Holyoake, of course, never treats his opponents with rudeness. Now, allow me to give you one or two specimens. He wonders that "so respectable a body as the Unitarians" should recognize one champion, Mr. Barker, whom he praised here, but tried to undermine in his public character—wrote against him, when he was supposed to be a candidate for the South Place Lecture, and placed him alongside another supposed candidate, Mr. I'erson. [Interruption.]

MR. SYME:—I hope the audience will allow Mr. Grant to choose his own illustrations, and to take his own course.

MR. GRANT:—Ladies and Gentlemen,—if you will listen carefully to objections to Christ's epithets, the man who makes those objections must expect that you will listen carefully to an examination of his own epithets. Mr. Holyoake wonders that so respectable a body as the Unitarians should recognize Mr. Barker; and he declares of another opponent of his, whose proper name is Woodman, but whose secular degree, in Mr. Holyoake's style, is "Gladiator" and "Reverend Knight-errant."—"I believe I am right in saying, Mr. Woodman is not recognized in respectable Swedenborgian quarters." (Vol. xii. p. 276.) Now, this is an attempt to separate a man's friends from him, because he has the honesty to come and defend Christianity. Thus Mr. Holyoake pursues Mr. Woodman as "the Kersley Gladiator," and declares it inexplicable that the Swedenborgians, who are understood to be men of refinement and courtesy, should put forward Mr. Woodman, and that they should allow us to "form an opinion of them from the temper and character of one who so represents them." This amounts to social persecution; and if the end of it were answered, the man who opposes Mr. Holyoake must be abandoned by his own friends; because he ever appeals to them, and says, "If you will put forward such a representative, then what are we to think of you?" The following letter, addressed to Samuel Morley, Esq., my chairman, was handed to me last Thursday evening, as the guide for this evening's discussion:—

"DEAR SIR,—Please inform Mr. Grant that next week I shall refer to a few of the texts on faith, by Paul and James, some of the epithets of Christ as applied to his opponents, and if time permits, to the texts on persecution, he will find in No. 345 of the

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Reasoner. It is not in my power to be more specific, not knowing yet which it may be most useful to take.

"Yours respectfully,

G. J. HOLYOAKE."

If it was appropriate to send me any account of the line Mr. Holyoake intended to pursue, it should have been done before the fifth night of the discussion. The indefiniteness of the syllabus might serve to mislead me, and to save the credit of the writer; for, whilst doing me this special favour, he is uncertain what course he shall follow; and should I rely on this outline, there is a prepared escape—that Mr. Holyoake warned me not to trust it. Mr. Holyoake having to lead, might know before now what passages of Scripture it would be "most useful to take," or what parts of his published statements, which he has repeated so largely in this discussion, he intended to re-quote. I have, however, prepared to examine further, and complete the doctrine of faith and works, which was conceded, as I proved by a quotation the last evening from this very article to which he promised a probable attention to-night, and which, happily, is not out of print yet. I shall also enter at length into what he calls "the epithets of Christ applied to his opponents," and shall justify the conduct of the Saviour, whose example justifies my own course, in boldly denouncing what I believe to be wrong:—speaking in plain, honest terms of evasions, prevarications, deceit or hypocrisy, in whomsoever found—the double dealing of men who demand smooth treatment, whilst in their own line they treat all who differ from them with harshness and a contemptuous insolence. [Hisses.]

Gentlemen, you will do your cause no credit, nor prove anything, by those noises. That very noise is an instance of the insolence of which I complain.

Apologizing for the hypocritical Pharisees, who "for a pretence made long prayers," and for a practice "devoured widows' houses," while the same free-thinkers are strong in condemning as "epithets" the deserved rebukes applied by "the Just One" towards his "betrayers and murderers." The Infidels patronize the Pharisees—I adore the Saviour, and must protest against the insult to our most sacred feelings, in calling Pharisees the Saviour's "opponents;" as if His claims and theirs were on the equal footing of two disputants in debate. In this inquiry we shall perhaps learn with what force Mr. Holyoake will support his assertion about "two Christs," and what use he can make of a different attitude towards different characters. We may possibly learn that in this, as in every other case, Mr. Holyoake is very powerful in assertions, and powerfully weak in maintaining them. There are many statements by Mr. Holyoake, which the readers of the

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debate will not require an answer; and I hope the committees will have no objection to our putting, in correcting the press, the number of the page or speech to which any argument is professedly a reply, or on which any assertion is founded, so that the reader may easily refer and compare the statements; and when either disputant does not so refer, he will convict himself. I should also like that every passage of Scripture quoted or referred to, may have the figures of chapter and verse supplied, and an index at the end of all passages so quoted, as well as an index of arguments, in which in one column Mr. Holyoake should state the points he argued for, and the pages in which they occur; and I, in a parallel columns, would put the figures of the page on which those arguments are replied to. This would facilitate the study of the discussion, and aid the readers on both sides in seeing the force or weakness of either side. Another kind of index might be employed to state any prominent words or terms, as Shakespeare, Amazon, Owen, and the pages where they are referred to. This plan would take up but little space, and would be as useful as it is impartial. As to some few points which Mr. Holyoake has affirmed or denied, I may here make a few observations. He said he never denied conscience. Will he define it, and read any those passages he has written upon it, as well as give the opinions of his admitted standard, the first volume of the *Cabinet of Reason*, on this subject? Will he state whether he believes there is sin, or any moral evil, beyond crime against utility, in this world; and whether he has not taught, and does not teach, that this crime is the inevitable misfortune of all criminals—whether he does not say (No. 194) that "man owes his actions to the destiny of his organization and position;" and whether his principles do not make the judge, law, and society, the only criminals in punishing offenders; as he represents God as the greatest sinner in punishing sinners? I understood him to say last evening, that he had often asked me, "What is saving faith?" but had not been answered. I am not aware that the question was ever asked me before, and reply, that saving faith is, practically relying upon a safe system, or plan, or leader; and that unbelief, or damning faith, is rejecting a safe plan for belief in an unsafe one, which is as true in politics, business, and pleasure, as in religion. There are two assertions I may here correct—one that I affirmed I had prepared enough matter for twelve nights, whereas, I simply stated, that to discuss fully the whole question, and carefully examine the Secular books I had read, would require so much time. The majority of my speeches are made upon Mr. Holyoake's assertions here, and therefore could not have been prepared before the discussion commenced, when I was left to that wide field of

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the *Reasoner* and other works, "now out of print," from which the greater part of Mr. Holyoake's speeches are selections, with joinings and variations; whilst at present I am not aware that I have employed ten sentences that I had printed before; but have quoted many which Mr. Holyoake had printed, though he does not stoop to this in reply—he only brings "*the Bible and the People*," to tax your faith in a reliance on what bad things he could prove, out of a work no one praised so highly as he did, before we came into this discussion. The second assertion of Mr. Holyoake is one which many have remarked upon to me, wondering that I should let it pass; and when I replied, that surely every one must know its impropriety, the answer was, that Mr. Holyoake's friends may not know, and that I ought to explain to them how little confidence they should place in his reckless and careless assertions. The statement in question has been made, I believe, by Mr. Holyoake on at least two occasions with great confidence in this discussion. It is the assertion that Mr. James is my superior in my church at Birmingham. Now, this shows that Mr. Holyoake's recollections of Independency, and his early religious experience, are very little to be relied upon. I have no doubt Mr. Holyoake believes them, but this arises from a confused recollection, which he has translated into confident tragical declamations, till his imagination is heated, and his judgment taken captive into the literal belief of his frequently-reiterated doleful recitations, to which I shall afterwards refer more fully. Now, on one point he is tested, and proved to be totally unacquainted with the system he has abandoned to oppose and vehemently protest against. Mr. Holyoake's statement last evening was—"Mr. James, who is Mr. Grant's superior in his own church, and I refer to persons so nearly connected with him, to remind him, as I am obliged to do, what his own doctrines are,—Mr. James, in most awful language, speaks," &c. Mr. Holyoake was never more unfortunate than in thus teaching me my own doctrines, except in the fact that I am as well acquainted with his writings as he is himself, and have a perverse way of quoting from them, giving page and volume; whilst he, contrary to my principles and to those of Mr. James, quotes Greg and Aquinas, and the *Morning Chronicle*, instead of the only authority—except the *Evangelical Magazine*—which Mr. James, or I, or any Independent recognizes—the New Testament. Now it happens that Mr. James is not in my church; and he is no more my ecclesiastical superior than Mr. Holyoake or Mr. Southwell is. We own no human masters; and that is the meaning of our name—Independents! Nor am I any more bound to Mr. James's opinions than to Mr. Holyoake's, except that I vastly prefer those of the former, and think that he

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has done more good, Secular and Spiritual, than all the Infidels in the world; whilst his *Anxious Inquirer* will still be stereotyped when the *Reasoner* is scarce. But though I have so much confidence in eulogizing Mr. James, I am not so slavishly bound to him, nor does he want such homage as Mr. Holyoake professes towards Mr. Robert Owen. In that fierce conflict about the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, when feeling ran high, and policy would instruct a "young minister" not to offend Protestant tendencies, I stood on the opposite side of the platform to Mr. James in a town's meeting, and spoke after him and against his opinions, before ten thousand people. Mr. Holyoake should know this, for some notice of it appeared in the *Reasoner*, as well as of a discussion held soon after, in which I took the side of what appeared to me the Romanists' liberty, whilst repudiating Roman dogmas; and this discussion was held in Birmingham Town-hall. Mr. James had a right to his opinions, and he conceded the same right to me, for he never dreamed of being a superior in my Church, of which he is not a member. And this may show you what confidence is due to Mr. Holyoake's views of Christians and Christianity. The little accuracy exhibited by Mr. Holyoake in using the concessions of men, and employing their names against each other, may be further seen in the following:—"After men in authority in the Independent Church, such as Dr. Ackworth, we may count the Rev. John Angell James as a preacher of the past." (Vol. xii. p. 435.) Now, Dr. Ackworth is not an Independent, but president of a Baptist college. I must, however, pass over some of these points, for I expect my time will be gone. But here is one point to which I will call Mr. Holyoake's attention. I understood Mr. Holyoake to say last evening, though the full statement is not in the very accurate report which I have received, namely, that while I neither avowed nor defended the doctrine of eternal punishment on the platform, I should in the pulpit be obliged to tell my congregation, that if they did not believe the Gospel they would be lost for ever. I say nothing here about the relevance of the argument to any end, since, if Mr. Holyoake does not tell his audience that they will be better off for receiving, and worse off for not accepting, his gospel—in other words, will be saved or damned temporally for faith or unbelief—his system brings no benefit to mankind; and therefore he has his hell and heaven, only both are shorter; but the principle is the same, or else he has nothing good to offer, and no danger to remove, and therefore not only loses his cause here, but has wasted his time and that of his hearers all his life—an argument which Mr. Holyoake will not trouble himself to understand, but which either makes his system worthless, or appends to it rewards and punish-

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ments, which every scheme must have, that makes any difference to men's condition. And a scheme that does not, had better not be obtruded on the public; so that either his argument against Gospel punishment and reward tells against his own system; or, he having no benefits to offer, we lose none by rejecting him, and therefore his scheme is worthless, because it neither relieves from a dreadful hell nor takes us to a blessed heaven. But if it does do good, its rejection by unbelief will do harm, and so we must be sufferers through want of faith; and if we are not sufferers through want of faith, we do not need his system, which on this idea is good for nothing; and therefore his whole object in this discussion fails, if he does not preach a Secular heaven and hell. I say, he will not trouble himself to master and re-state this argument. But I wish to know whether I am right in regarding him as saying, that I am obliged to tell my audience in preaching, they will be lost if they do not believe; and if so, whether Mr. Holyoake means that I have any other obligation than my own conscience. If he does not, why did he refer to my own congregation; as if there I was under some different obligation to what every honest man is under in all circumstances? Why did he describe me before my own congregation, as if I were not as free there as he before any of his audiences? It is true, I did not introduce either eternal punishments, or hereditary depravity, or responsibility for belief, or special providence, into this discussion, because they are not in our correspondence—they are not topics we agreed to debate, but are the various refuges to which Mr. Holyoake has fled, as a grand compliment to my arguments. This will be seen by those who read the correspondence. I am not afraid of any of these subjects, nor would Mr. Holyoake have said any stress upon them, if he had not been afraid of what he agreed to maintain, and by which in this discussion I honourably abide.

Mr. Holyoake claims the right to lead in this discussion, but he has no right to mislead, as he does, when he departs from the line agreed to in our correspondence. It is on this account that I shall not follow him into that rambling topic he proposes for the last night—"The general advantages of Secularism." He has no right to introduce new elements; he had better prove that the three benefits agreed upon are not invalidated. When I observed that a specific statement of the things advocated as moral by Secularists would be unfit for a promiscuous audience, Mr. Holyoake seemed almost as much offended as when I stated the opinions of his friend Mr. Owen; but as I proved everything asserted on that subject, Mr. Holyoake knows I can prove the other. It is in reference to social and moral questions, on which the sanctity of social life depends, thereby a misunderstan-

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tion and endearing permanent relationships around bodily instincts, that a system of morality should be pure and holy; and it was in reference to opinions on these subjects that I said there were certain doctrines of Secularism not suitable for a promiscuous audience. I refer not to grossness of statements as to words, but to the system of conduct taught, and advocated, and recommended by Mr. Holyoake. I do not wish to debate these points for the reasons stated; but Mr. Holyoake is not to escape, and shall not escape, by any warm repudiation of his own teachings; and now he may decide his own course. I here present to him a volume of the *Reasoner*, with a note referring to the place, in which he praises certain books; and the books are there, with passages marked, which he may deal with according to his own judgment. I neither cite the works, nor the publisher, nor the object of the works, but I will give one clean quotation as a specimen. The writer says, "I fully agree with that most amiable of moral heretics, Shelley, that 'Seduction, which term could have no meaning in a rational society, has now a most tremendous one.'" Both of the books now handed to Mr. Holyoake carefully seek to destroy modesty, as the prejudice of feeling, and teach that virtue, in these respects of personal purity and social relationship, are mere matters of conventionality or custom, from which they are free who know the world; and the worst feature is, that one of these writers prostitutes the name of Christ to his vile purpose,—pretends to respect Christianity, and to be a Christian. Nothing is meaner than a mask, and nothing viler than the purpose for which these men wear it.

I refrain from saying more, for a very obvious reason, but feel bound to say this, to inspire with modesty, if possible, the impugners of the morality of Jesus Christ; and to warn, without polluting this audience and the readers of this discussion. Mr. Holyoake will be good enough to return me the books, after any observations he may be disposed to make on this subject, that I may follow him, should he attempt to justify this "science—the providence of man," and "morality, independent of Scripture." And he would be a fairer disputant, if instead of going on to other dogmatic statements, he would stop and battle out his past assertions, especially about the sufficiency of morality. The note now sent to Mr. Holyoake is as follows:—"The works here sent are commended, page—vol.—*Reasoner*. The parts you are requested to notice, if you think it worth while, are bracketed, and the pages turned down; the commencing sentence is thus marked—[. There is another book of the same kind, [I give him the name]; I do not know where the fourth, Graffite's book, can be obtained." What time have I now?—[to the Umpire.]

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THE UMPIRE:—Three minutes.

MR. GRANT:—I have only three minutes left, in which to enter upon the question of the two Christs, the character of our Saviour.

THE UMPIRE:—Would you like to take it next time?

MR. GRANT:—I should prefer it.

THE UMPIRE:—Mr. Grant will take thirty-three minutes next time, sitting down now three minutes before his time.

MR. HOLYOAKE: I have to ask, before I commence to speak, that the chairman, Mr. Grant's chairman, shall read the passages or titles, or whatever else Mr. Grant refers me to. It is not my place to do his work. If he has given quotations, I demand that they be read, and I will answer them. (Interruption.)

MR. REED: Mr. Grant has stated his view of the question, and he leaves it to Mr. Holyoake to take just that course which he thinks proper under the circumstances.

MR. HOLYOAKE: The question which I put to the justice of this meeting is, whether after the statements Mr. Grant has made, he is not bound to give this meeting some means of testing their truth. It is not my business to do Mr. Grant's work; it is Mr. Grant's business to do his own work—or his chairman.

MR. GRANT: May I explain? (Interruption.) I'll take my three minutes now. Mr. Holyoake says I ought to afford this meeting data for proving what I say. Have I not given Mr. Holyoake data to disprove it, if he can and dare? Have I not said—(Uproar, and cries of "Read it.")

MR. SYME: The two pamphlets are upon the population question: upon the checks to population. I suppose you may guess the rest. Treated as a question,—(Interruption.) Silence, if you please. Treated as a question of political economy, there is nothing of which any one has reason to be ashamed; viewed in another light, then people may take a different view of the subject. (Interruption.) I have no wish to read anything of the kind before this audience, but I undertake to say this: I challenge either Mr. Grant or his chairman, on the next evening of discussion, that I shall read every objectionable passage before this audience that are in these two pamphlets, if they will before this audience also read a selection of passages which I shall make from the Old Testament writings. (Interruption.) Ladies and

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Gentlemen, I abide by my challenge: I know I am quite safe. I shall never have them to read, either this night or any future night.

MR. GRANT:—Allow me to state, that I think it is not the chairman's place to say anything of this kind. Whatever Mr. Holyoake has to state, let him say it.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—My own opinion is—(Uproar.)

MR. REED:—Gentlemen, there seems some misapprehension on this matter. I do not know whether I am wrong, but my impression is, that Mr. Holyoake's chairman has not acted discreetly in the suggestion he has made. I distinctly declined to read that document, and I do not know—I appeal to the meeting—whether it is desirable that any such challenge should be made or accepted on this occasion.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—You hear what Mr. Syme has stated, and I will accept myself his proposal. If Mr. Grant will read the passages in the Bible I will read those he has marked. I will take the responsibility of doing it. Now the two books to which reference has been made, are, First, "Notes on the Population Question, by Anti-Marcus;" second, "Moral Physiology, or a brief and plain Treatise on the Population Question, by Robert Dale Owen." These are the two books to which he has referred. Now I am going to say that the first which he mentions I have no recollection at this moment of ever reading; but I doubt not, since it is published by my friend Mr. Watson, that it is a strictly moral book. Robert Dale Owen's book is a medical work, and written with a pure intent. Mr. Robert Dale Owen writes in solution of a question which the Rev. Mr. Malthus first made prominent, and that every statesman of this day allows to be of the utmost practical importance to the working classes. John W. Parker, the eminent Church of England publisher, lately issued a work on Political Economy, which has been accepted by all Europe, and which thus states the scientific morality of the very question of wages and population discussed in both these books. I read the extract:—"Unhappily, sentimentality rather than common sense, is the genius that usually presides over the discussion of these subjects; and while there is a growing sensitiveness to the hardships of the poor, and a ready disposition to admit claims in them upon the good offices of other people, there is all but universal unwillingness to face the *real difficulty* of their position or advert at all to the conditions which nature has made indispensable to the improvement of their physical lot. Discussions on the con-

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dition of the labourers, projects of one kind or another for improving it, were in no country and in no time of the world so ripe as at present; but there is a tacit agreement to ignore totally the law of wages, or to discuss it with such terms as 'hard-hearted Malthusianism;' as if it were not a thousand times more hard-hearted to tell human beings that they may, than that they may not call into existence swarms of creatures who are sure to be miserable and most likely to be depraved." Now that passage contains a statement of the problem which both those books discuss, and I deny that there is a particle of immorality in either of the books. And to test Mr. Grant's sincerity and fairness I make to him this proposal. Robert Dale Owen in his preface to his book uses these words: "The subject I intend to discuss is strictly physiological, although connected, like many other physiological subjects, with political economy, morals, and social science." Now, I propose to Mr. Grant, that a jury shall be nominated of twelve recognized persons; that they shall consist of four clergymen, four physicians, and four political economists. Mr. Grant shall name half, and I will name half; they shall declare their opinion as to the chaste language, the pure spirit, and the moral purpose of these books; and by their verdict I will abide. Now for the present, I pursue my argument. These things which you have heard referred to have frequently been alluded to. I have no objection whatever to anybody reading the other side, and will abide by the verdict which pure-minded men and women shall come to upon these subjects. And mark you, these books referred to are not mine; I have not written them; I have had no part in them; all I have done has been to advertize them; and Mr. Grant has advertized in his *Bible and the People*, works ten times more disreputable. ["Name them."] I am thinking of a quack advertisement of Kaye's Worsdell's Pills.—I have repeatedly seen it—containing statements which every well-informed man knows to be perfectly false; and all the religious papers contain abundance of the same things. You had reference made to the *Evangelical Magazine*. Mr. Grant says he has no responsibility for that magazine; but I said that what was stated by that magazine was justified by the passages which I read. He tells me that Paul said, "prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Then when I have proved all things, and held fast that which I deem to be good, why am I to be pronounced to be accursed for having done so? That is the sort of language to which I make objection. Mr. Grant is utterly beside the truth when he says I have given any such advice to anybody as that which St. Paul gives respecting those who differ from him. All I ever proposed to do was to ascertain whether the persons who stood up in our name, to repre-

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sent our opinions, really entertained our opinions—a very different thing from saying, "Let that man be accursed who happens to disagree with me in opinion." So far from advising that these people should not be received into men's houses, the very persons of whom I have said these things are welcome guests in my own house, and I have friendly intercourse with them. Mr. Grant, it seems, objects to my referring to the Old Testament. Yet it is always understood by persons on the side on which Mr. Grant stands, that the Old Testament is an inspired book as well as the New Testament. If you think it is a book disqualified for reference, say so at once; if not, I have a right to refer to it. Let Mr. Grant confine himself to the New Testament if he pleases. To say that Mr. Woodman was a Kersley Gladiator, was no more than he said himself. I can produce placards in which language of the most offensive kind, in the way of challenges, is perpetually paraded. All I did with regard to him, was to say, when he pursued a certain course which I knew the respectable persons in that body did not approve,—and it was only an act of fairness to them to say—"I will not make you responsible for the peculiarities of an individual"—a very different thing from using language which the Apostle uses when he says, "These men are liars, who do not believe as we do; receive them not into your houses; their mouths must be stopped." If you find that I ever used this sort of language to anybody, I will apologize for its use and retract it. Will you do the same with regard to the language I have read to you? A proposal is made by Mr. Grant that notes shall be made in the discussion; and that unless there is a note made in every speech referring to something the speaker has said it shall be deemed a conviction, on account of the omission. Why, here, with the boast of the *Banner*, and to his own congregation, that he speaks one-third more than I do, how is it possible for me to reply to everything which he says? By what right, therefore, shall it be pretended that if I do not make reference to *all* he says (many things he says I consider quite useless, and not worth reference) it is therefore to be a conviction. Conscience is the educated sense of right and wrong which every man has. Mr. Grant says that saving faith is relying upon a safe system or a safe leader. Then I say, we have the same faith as yourselves. Now the saving faith in Christianity is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" and Mr. James says in the book from which I read, and which Mr. Grant has not repudiated, that though we be philosophers, or poets, or philanthropists, and have not faith, it will go hard with us. You see, therefore, that while we say that man may have faith in a right course of conduct which shall justify him, they require as superadded an ar-

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bitrary faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our position is then—you say, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ:" We say, "Believe in good works, and good works will save you." Mr. Grant is very much mistaken about the eulogium I passed upon the *Bible and the People*. I praised it, distinguishing the respects in which it was worthy of praise, and leaving unpraised all those parts which from the first numbers I thought disreputable, and which caused me for so many months never to look into the publication at all. He has put simply a congregational interpretation upon the word "superior" with regard to Mr. James. I said that Mr. James was superior in that popular sense in which because of his age, because of his authority, because of his great learning, and because of his greater eminence, he is naturally the superior of any other person. I do not know how you should regard, or how Mr. Grant should regard this as offensive to himself. It is acknowledged throughout the whole Independent body that the Rev. Mr. James is a very eminent man. Well, the last thing I notice is simply a remark about my hell being shorter than Mr. Grant's. Is it not a mere Swedenborgian play upon words to argue that when I point out a course of conduct, and say that if it be a right course there will come right consequences to you, and if it be a wrong course you will suffer evil consequences—to represent that as being the same thing as saying that hundreds of years after you are dead and all the consequences of your conduct are lost to the world, you shall be raised again expressly for the purpose of being damned to eternal torment for ever? It is the horrible inhumanity of this which constitutes the difference between the hell of the Christian and the consequences of evil conduct to which we ourselves refer. If that is all Mr. Grant means—if he says there is no difference between his notion of future punishment and mine, then indeed I am willing to agree with him. But I say, there is that horrible difference of the eternity and intensity of never-ending torment, of which we have no part or particle in the system which we preach. We moreover undertake to show that this system is no apology for sin, is no extenuation for crime; but takes more rational, more cogent, and effectual modes of repressing it than the contrary doctrine which Mr. Grant himself preaches. I, however, go on to answer what he said concerning the two Christs of the New Testament which he declared I could not establish. Now I take a class of Scripture texts. A number of texts will bring out the moral bearings of the doctrine of eternal punishment, and the gentle and austere aspects of the two Christs. There has been a little book in Mr. Grant's hands some three years entitled "The Logic of Death," in which I have said, "The greatest aphorism ascribed to Christ, called his Golden Rule, tells

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us that we should do unto others as we would others should do unto us. It is not moral audacity, but a logical and legitimate application of this maxim to say that if men shall eventually stand before the bar of God, God will not pronounce upon any that appalling sentence, 'Cast them into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;' because this will not be doing to others as he, in the same situation, would wish to be done unto himself. If frail man is to 'do *good* to them that hate him,' God, who is said to be also Love, will surely not *burn* those who, in their misfortune and blindness, have erred against him. He who is above us all in power will be also above us all in magnanimity.

These things are precisely to the question. In our correspondence, to which I hope you will look, I asked Mr. Grant expressly whether the law of Christianity would be observed by him who gave the law as well as by the people to whom the law was given. I put that question for the very purpose of this night, and Mr. Grant made no reply at all to it. He has, therefore, no excuse at all for saying that I am talking upon subjects which have not been agreed upon in our correspondence. If a man does wrong to me and I do wrong to him in return, has not the ancient sage warned me, "I come down to the level of mine enemy"? Will God thus descend to the level of vindictive man? Who has not thrilled at the lofty question of Volumnia to Coriolanus?

> "Thinkest thou it honourable for a noble man
> Still to remember wrongs?"

Shall God be less honourable and remember the wrong done against him, not by his equals but by his own frail creatures? Those passages in the New Testament which we feel to have most interest and dignity, are the parables in which a servant is told to forgive a debt to one who had forgiven him; in which a brother is to be forgiven until seventy times seven. In the Lord's prayer we are taught to say, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Now what is this but erecting a high moral argument against the relentlessness of the future punishment of erring man? If therefore man is to forgive, shall God do less? Shall man be more just than God? Is there anything so grand in the life of Christ as his forgiving his enemies as he expired upon the cross? Was it God the Sufferer behaving more nobly than will God the Judge? Was this the magnificent teaching of fraternity to vengeful man, or is it to be regarded but as a sublime libel on the hereafter judgments of heaven? Will Christ who told the world he loves mercy rather than sacrifice, sacrifice our souls for ever? Will Christ who said "Blessed are

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the merciful," not be merciful to us? Will Christ who had compassion on the poor of the earth, not have compassion on the poor at his judgment seat? Will Christ who told us to be reconciled to our offended brother before approaching the throne of heaven—will he sitting upon that throne, violate his own rule and not be reconciled to us? The Rev. Abel Thomas in his admirable Tract on Universalism, just now being circulated in our city, puts these seven unanswerable questions, which bring out the difference between the gentleness of Christ as a moral teacher and the austerity and terribleness of his judicial proceedings:

"1. As we are required to love our enemies, may we not safely infer that God loves *his* enemies? If God loves his enemies, will he punish them more than will be for their good? Would endless punishment be for the good of any being?

"2. If God hates *his* enemies, why should we love *our* enemies? Are we required to be better than our God? If God loves those only who love *him*, what better is he than the sinner? (Luke vi. 32, 33.)

"3. As we are forbidden to be overcome of evil, can we safely conclude that God will ever be overcome of evil? Would not the infliction of endless punishment prove that God *had* been overcome of evil?

"4. If man does wrong in returning evil for evil, would not God do wrong were he to return evil for evil? Would not the infliction of endless punishment be proof positive that God was returning evil for evil?

"5. Will not an infinitely good God do the best he possibly can for the whole human family? Would not the infliction of endless punishment be the very worst that God could do for any being in the universe?

"6. As we are commanded to overcome evil with good, may we not safely infer that God will do the same? Would the infliction of never-ending punishment be overcoming evil with good?

"7. Is God "without variableness or even the shadow of turning?" If God loves his enemies *now*, will he not *always* love them? If God will always love his enemies, will he not always seek their good?"

Now I have put these cases because, to my mind, they bring distinctly before this audience and before Mr. Grant the antagonism between the gentleness of some precepts of Christ and the terror of other sayings of his. You tell me, that one class of precepts are the pride and glory of your New Testament; and whenever I have a controversy with Christians, they always fall back upon the moral precepts, and say, how forgiving they are, how kind they

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are, and how generous they are—Christ ever preaching love to mankind, love to our brethren, and love even to our enemies. I want to know, then, as there are two orders of sentences, one telling us of the terrible hereafter judgments of heaven, how are we to reconcile them? They are both spoken by the same Being, yet they contradict each other. You cannot explain, you cannot harmonize the sentences to be pronounced by Christ with the precepts he gave on earth. You make it out that man is more merciful than God; you make it out that God himself will not observe the grand precepts of forgiveness which appeared in the New Testament. With those precepts of forgiveness I coincide; those I am willing to accept; those I admire; but these utterly cancel and destroy all the moral efficacy of the other example, which you represent to be the example which God himself will not follow. I therefore propose to make my selection—to take the New Testament's gentler precepts—to believe in the gentle Christ, and to reject the austere Christ. Well, when Christ said, "Cut off thy hand if it offend thee; it were better thy member should perish than thy soul be cast into hell"—I want to know whether I am to believe that literally, and if not, why not? Bishop Hampden—or the bishop who was formerly Dr. Hampden—lays it down, I think very soundly, as a maxim in theology, that "we read in the New Testament as a book of *facts*, and put upon them the best interpretation which we are able, and that becomes our doctrine." Every Christian is obliged to do this. Mr. Grant takes the New Testament, and he finds certain passages which he has to reconcile with others, and he explains them by the aid of those others. I want to know by what right he does so. If he may put his human construction upon the New Testament, have I not a right to put mine upon it also? I mean to say, that every time you find these conflicting texts, you absolutely put upon them the construction which is most humane. You appeal to the progress of civilization and the growth of humanity, and you take those precepts which seem to have the most relation and the most intimate harmony with our present condition and progress, and you say, "These are to interpret the others." Thus you set above the Scriptures the light of human reason. You appeal to nature and experience, and by those you interpret the Scriptures; and I want to know why I have not a right to do the same thing?—why it shall be innocent in you to do it, and sinful in me?—why you are to go to the judgment-seat, to be admitted into heaven for your interpretations, and why I have not the same right to go there, and be admitted into heaven, for my interpretations? What is honest on your part is equally honest upon mine. What is sincere with you, and inno-

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cent, is equally sincere and innocent with me; and the right of private judgment implies the right to follow my judgment, otherwise your right of private judgment is a mere mockery. Take these cases: Christ says, "Take no thought for the morrow;" and Paul says, "Be careful for nothing." In answer to this, Mr. Grant will remind me of the sentence, "Be diligent in business." I demand to know why I am to accept this one text to explain away or cancel the other two? Archbishop Whately gives this instance: "When we read of the civil power as ordained by God for the punishment of evil doers, we may fairly conclude this to be inconsistent with unlimited submission to outrage and robbery. In the same manner that the precept, 'Sell all, and give to the poor,' could not have been meant as the universal and permanent application, is fairly inferred from the charge given to them that are rich in this world to be ready to give, since no Christian could have been rich if all had been required to divest themselves of property." Well, that is a very reasonable interpretation; but by what right does the Archbishop, whose theological writings I always read with more satisfaction and with more profit than the writings of any other divine—by what right does he interpret one passage by another, taking that which is compatible with our human progress, and rejecting the others, which are not compatible with it? He does it by that instinctive principle on which we all must act, of interpreting Scripture by the light of reason, and rejecting all those parts which contradict our evident progress or interfere with our notions of humanity. I say that every Christian is obliged to do this. The privilege I claim, and for which you use these harsh terms—the privilege I claim, and which seems to you one of so much opprobrium in its exercise—is precisely what you are doing. I undertake to show Mr. Grant, when he comes to treat upon these subjects, that he does the same thing—rejects one part of Scripture, and cleaves to the other.

MR. GRANT:—Ladies and Gentlemen,—You will see how very unwilling Mr. Holyoake was to burn his fingers and blister the reputation of his cause, by the statement of those principles which he recommends in his *Reasoner*. Mr. Holyoake said he had not read the first book; and yet he said there was no immorality in either of them. He said he only advertised it; yet I gave him the book in which he reviewed it, and praised them both. Mr. Holyoake says we must interpret Scripture to accord with progress. We are to interpret Scripture according to its true meaning, whatever progress is. It is Mr. Holyoake who misinterprets Scripture, not we that have to shape it into different forms. Mr.

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Holyoake assumes, that because there is punishment for disbelief in Christianity, therefore man may punish. Is that the principle of Christianity? What does Paul say? "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth?" I do not know that I need say anything more upon that subject. Mr. Holyoake inquires whether we are better than God. Now, let me give you an answer. The other day we read in the *Times* that Lord Campbell had to condemn two persons, and he said: "Here are two men occupying respectable positions, and who might maintain an honourable course of life, but whom it is my painful duty to condemn"—what for? Did he not love them? Did he hate them? Had he nothing else to consider than these men? What then? He passed the sentence for the good of society, and for the sake of the great principles of government. Ladies and gentlemen, there is no more immoral principle, no principle more subversive of our rights and liberties, than to give private feelings to judges; when the full force and purity of law consists in subordinating the discretion and private feeling of a judge to the great principles of the benefit and safety of society. The question is not whether Mr. Holyoake has as much right to give an opinion on the Bible as I have. He is perpetually dealing with this claptrap about his rights. Nobody questions them, therefore he need say nothing about them. The question is, whether his opinion is right; whether it is not drawn from a partial and prejudiced view of isolated passages and single doctrines, dislocated out of their connexion and proportion. The question is not whether Mr. Holyoake, amongst the competition of clerical ability, would be more popular than as the single leader of the Secularist sect, but whether his position is a tenable one. The question is not whether we are free to form our own opinions, on which we might both declaim for ever, but whether Christianity is useful or injurious; for if truth is useful—and it is useful—it is true; and if true and useful there is no slavery in submitting to it, any more than in submitting to Euclid, whose demonstrations are not founded on some irrelevant theory of liberty, but on the majesty of truth, which has a claim to supremacy even over free-thinkers. And on the idea of Christianity —that Christ is what he is there represented to be—there is no tyranny in his claims. To treat his commands as those of an ordinary man, and find usurpation in them, is to assume the whole question, and try the ideas of religion by an incompatible standard. Now, with reference to literal interpretation of Scripture; Mr. Holyoake writes a plea for its literal interpretation in his *Reasoner*—which I hope is not "out of print" yet—and on this he founds some of his cabinet of horrors. He knows that

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no other book is so interpreted; but he cannot afford to do as he would be done by, and treat Scripture language as we treat all written and spoken speech. I have not time to enter fully into this question, but may give a few hints that will be useful. "The literal," he says, "is that sense which best adapts itself to the common understanding;" whereas, the less cultivated men are, the more figurative speech they use; and this is why the Gospel is popular, and metaphysics are not: the very phrase "popular" means a violation of scientific accuracy, as Mr. Holyoake knows, only, as usual, forgets to teach it in the right place. He insists on the literal for us, and says, "the angel's trumpet-peal, and the Judge's sentence, and the worm that ever gnaws, and the fire that is never quenched, is literal" (Vol. i. p. 34). He does not stop to prove it: his great argument is *ipse dixit*. When you say, "Strike while the iron's hot," do you mean "strike," "iron," and "heat?" Can any person speak five minutes freely without a figure? Were not the "worm" and the "fire" local references to a fact in Jewish history? And can we have literally a worm living in fire? Was it ever thought of? Did not each mean punishment, and are they not literally inconsistent with each other? If it be literal, then, is it not literal "chaff" that is to be literally burned, and literal "wheat" that is to be carried into a literal "garner?" And is there anything so terrible in this? Are there not other illustrations,—"outer darkness," the darkness outside a mansion, where there is feasting inside; and does this illustration include "fire"—in the "dark?" Is it not pitiful trifling to select one form of imagery and omit others; to be literal in one part, and figurative in another, in the same statement? And is not this scandalous perversion of language the main force of all Mr. Holyoake's irrelevant solemnities on eternal punishment to which he fled as a great compliment to my argument on the doctrine he thus avowed he could not impugn? Mr. Birch adopts Mr. Holyoake's literal scheme and charges the Saviour with recommending "self-mutilation;" and I have been informed, of what Mr. Holyoake did not deny, that he stated in a lecture that a poor ignorant girl who burnt her hand "literally" fulfilled that saying of Christ, "if thy right hand offend thee cut it off." Now, this girl did not "cut" it off; she "burnt" it; and no man can literally cut off his right hand with his left; and no man need do it; for though his right hand may offend others, it is not very likely to offend himself; so that if they will have "literal" they shall have it, and it will literally stultify them. And they must prepare to be literalized themselves. We require a literal picture of Mr. Holyoake's entrancing virtue, that we may fall in love with her And when that *Reasoner*, which records so many "births

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and deaths" of theories and organs of progress, declares that "the cause of the people is suspended," we will look for the rope with which the friends of the people strangled the cause they so warmly espoused; for it is certain that they need not be cut off with a shilling: it is a waste of money to buy a rope, since these great linguists have accomplished by their own rope of sand that which dispenses with a literal rope. This kind of literal criticism on Christianity may be illustrated by a case Mr. Holyoake gave us very lately. I thought I had brought the *Reasoner* with me, but I have not; I must, therefore, give it in my own words. Mr. Holyoake was—as it has often happened—in the wrong train, and was too late; when there were some people waiting to answer him. He has often had accidents of that sort. He was driven to take a cab, and hurry to the place: at last, he says, he became hungry, and betook himself to the eating department. He says, "I was cutting away, and found my knife strike against something hard: I thought at first it was a tough chicken bone—[I do not vouch for the exact words, but I do vouch for the exact truth of the statement]—I thought it must be some tough chicken bone, but I found it was the New Testament I received from Gloucester Gaol; and if I had eaten it I should have fulfilled that saying, 'The zeal of mine house hath eaten me up.'" Now observe, if Mr. Holyoake had eaten it, it would not have been the zeal of God's house but the zeal of his appetite; and in the next place, it is not "mine" house, as he quoted it, but "Thine" house. In this statement we see an illustration of Mr. Holyoake's use of Scripture, and how he treats Scripture. In the first place, you must observe he was cutting the New Testament with a knife,—that is his method: it is not by opinion and argument, and logical analysis, but by force and distortion; and secondly, he was cutting the New Testament in the dark, as he constantly does.

I must now say a few words on the two Christs—the mild and the austere, affirmed last evening by Mr. Holyoake, who seemed to think that he could prove contradictory principles, because the Saviour is mild to the sincere and austere to the hypocrite. These two are one, and so Mr. Birch says in the *Reasoner*, where he blames Christ for not doing what Mr. Holyoake blames him for doing. Whoever loves virtue hates vice; whoever loves openness and honesty, condemns cunning and duplicity; and in this sense alone there are two Christs. This evening, Mr. Holyoake undertook to present us with "the austere Christ," in the Saviour's conduct towards those whom Mr. Holyoake dignifies as Christ's "opponents," who, in this light, are Mr. Holyoake's friends; at any rate his adopted clients. We shall see how there are two Christs. First there is the Infidel Christ, and the Christian Christ:

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there is "the Charlatan Christ" of Messrs. Birch and Holyoake, and the Christ "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," of the Evangelists and Apostles. There is the portrait drawn by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and the portrait by J. W. Birch, M.A., of Oxford, G. J. Holyoake and assistants. I have already quoted Mr. Holyoake's compliment to the Saviour, in which he passes by the malignant conspiracy of the Pharisees against the Saviour's life, to abuse that answer which foiled their malevolence—as "the trickery of the Charlatan Christ," and now Mr. Holyoake is again the Pharisees' champion, to defend their vile deeds from the Saviour's honest words. (Hisses.) Well, if they deserve the words, why does he complain of them? This is ever Mr. Holyoake's course: he has an eye for an epithet; but he is blind to the epithets he flings about, and disregards the just occasion on which others use a manly, because right and honest speech. Christ is a "charlatan" in Mr. Holyoake's estimation, because he called hypocrites hypocrites. Then I prefer a charlatan. The word will get an honest meaning from the Infidel use of it. The liberal treatment Jesus receives at the hands of free-thinkers is a remarkable illustration of the liberty they take with great and sacred characters. Mr. Holyoake's greatest money patron, who saved the *Reasoner* in extremity, at the end of the seventh volume, after Mr. Holyoake had written a farewell to his readers (interruption).

MR. SYME:—Each speaker should be allowed to take his own course. Order, if you please, Gentlemen. (Interruption.) I must beg the audience to be quiet. If you (addressing Mr. Grant) would help me to keep the peace, there would not be these disturbances constantly arising. It is very awkward for me to have to keep the audience quiet.

MR. REED:—I do submit that each of these gentlemen has a perfect right to take such a line of argument as he thinks proper. Let us hear whatever is said, so that we may get whatever instruction we can. We lose a great deal of time by these interruptions.

MR. GRANT:—After Mr. Holyoake had written a farewell to his readers, Mr. Birch saved the *Reasoner* in its extremity, at the end of the seventh volume, and since the commencement of Mr. Holyoake's correspondence with me sent a handsome donation of £20 to meet the extremity: without whom the *Reasoner* could not exist. This gentleman, J. W. Birch, M.A., of Oxford, whose money is the *Reasoner's* providence, its resurrection and preservation, has free access to its pages, and makes free with the holiest name in a way

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that should blight the reputation of any party that allows it, and especially at the same time is so finely fanciful and sentimentally horrified at the "epithets of Jesus." Mr. Birch observes: "Jesus however had more good dinners than he would have got by sticking to his plane; and if he had no where to lay his head, it was his own fault, when he only had to ask his father for food and lodging." . . . . "Jesus is not to be compared with any one of the thousands who have to lie in the streets of London all night, or under an arch. We may laugh at this exaggerated assumption of miseries, that are attempted to be made evidence of his superiority, and to found upon it his divinity, but we are far from laughing at the miseries of those times. We deplore those times, these times, or any times, when people were exposed to such an agitator as Jesus, and such Charlatanry as Christianity. Nevertheless, we cannot but feel a sense of the ridiculous in reading such stories as those in the Gospels, and the escapades of Jesus, Peter, and Co." . . . "I dislike Jesus humanly as well as divinely." . . . "According to what we are told in the Gospels, he was what we should call a rather vulgar agitator, who talked much good with a much greater balance of nonsense." The truth of Mr. Birch's criticisms will be obvious, from the fact that he concludes this tirade of abuse on our Lord by saying, "Almost the only good thing that Jesus ever said was that morality and salvation were quite independent of any belief in him." (Hear, hear, and marks of approbation.) If those gentlemen, instead of saying, "hear, hear," would find it in the New Testament, it would be wiser of them. I say it is a shame for you to applaud slanders on Christ. This "only good thing" should be found and quoted, as the Saviour's "concession" to Mr. Holyoake. But is not all this too low for criticism, and can they, who so treat the Saviour, form a proper estimate of his religion? Men who travesty his miracles, asperse his character, call religion earthly and spiritual, and the followers of Christ who do good to the suffering-poor "Christian Mrs. Gamps." If there is a seizure for Church rates, they head the notice with capitals in the *Reasoner*,—"JESUS CHRIST THE PATRON OF BROKERS." Now if this religion teaches a "spiritual dependence," it does not patronize legal seizures; and if it does patronize these things, it is far from being what the Secularists now assume. They cannot maintain both these charges; not only does one form of infidelity neutralize another, but the arguments on different platforms, by the same teachers, stultify the Reasoners themselves. J. W. Thornton cannot define the word "republic" without insulting us. He says there are many views on the subject, debated with animosity amongst the republicans (which shows how thoroughly settled "the things of this life" are, and what a "know-

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ledge" of them we have, compared with the "probability" of another; and what a firm basis this knowledge gives to "the primary duties of man to man"), since Mr. Thornton observes that the difference amongst republicans "puts one in mind of religionists all eager to murder one another for the glory of God." (*Reasoner*, vol. iv. p. 346.) Is not Mr. Holyoake right, then, when he declares that a tract, called "Infidelity enlisted in the Cause of Christianity," would be more appropriately styled "Impudence enlisted in the Cause of Christianity"? (Vol. iv. p. 304.) But this preposterous burlesque on the principles of Christianity is not equal to the still further insults heaped on our blessed Lord, under the editorial superintendence of Mr. Holyoake, who objects to the Saviour's "epithets," and declares that he will not allow anything vile or scurrilous in the *Reasoner* to disparage the glorious cause of free thought. He, however, admits such writing as follows from Mr. J. W. Birch, M.A., which for reckless slander and base insinuation cannot be paralleled in all literature.

Listen and judge for yourselves:—"We think it rather bad morality that promises a blessing when people persecute you. Christ recommends a mutilation of the person utterly incompatible with morality. The laws of Moses needed superseding, but the contrary precepts of Jesus would be utterly subversive of all justice. Not to resent crimes, would be as immoral as to give to every one that asketh, whether they were good or bad." Mr. Holyoake says it is immoral to punish crimes. "Not to resist evil, we say, is very immoral; we should, on every occasion, show our love of good, by opposition to what is bad." . . . "We think the treasure in heaven worse than the treasure upon earth. We think it an immorality to turn people's attention from earth to indefinable treasures above. Of course it is very good measure for the priest, who is assumed to keep the treasury of heaven. From Christ downwards to the present time, priests have turned such precepts to their own advantage, and taught that, in giving to them, they were laying up a treasure in heaven." [Interruption.] If I am not to be heard, I shall not go on. "A bag seems to have been kept for the purpose; to tell people to take no care of themselves." Now if Christ was all this, he was a very good Secularist; but he was not this, and you cannot find it in the New Testament. Mr. Holyoake, in this same volume, p. 109, 110, advises those Infidels who go to church, because they dare not stay away (since they would be unable to keep their trade, or preserve their situations), to atone for this, by the Secular penance of handing to him some of the money they get by hypocrisy. Mr. Birch proceeds:—"Judging these matters in a merely human way, Jesus should have asked forgiveness of himself, or of his father, or

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of the people, for having been the instrument of their perdition—having brought destruction on Jerusalem, and the punishment of everlasting fire hereafter, for mistaking him for a man. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,' has often been cited as the example of forgiveness; but we say, the Jews were the injured party in the affair." Christ injured the Jews when they crucified him! This is the honesty of the new morality! "If he got a civil word from the Pharisees and Scribes, he answered them with low epithets." This is untrue: he reproved them with just epithets, when they treated him uncivilly, meanly, malignantly.

I shall have time only to refer to one other passage. He speaks of the "stupidity and ambition, simplicity and cunning," in the character of Peter. (Hear, hear.) Then you ought to blush if you own it. If you praise it, you are as bad as the writer. "From such a class as Peter's, no doubt Jesus might largely recruit. We see Jesus give the keeping of the money to Judas. The Eleven must have thought this care of riches rather inconsistent with the profession of poverty and having no care for the things of this world." . . . "Of the class of easy converts among the females, might be reckoned Magdalene. Her new vocation was certainly a much easier method of gaining a livelihood than common prostitution. There is no assertion that she became immaculate. It is evident she loved the Lord, and the Lord loved her. It was certainly a place well fitted for a woman's ambition to be the chosen of the Lord. It would not do for a leader of the people to make these selections in these days. Christ set her above an honest woman—her sister Mary." Mary was not her sister; he mistakes the Marys altogether, and is as ignorant as he is bold and slanderous. "Her sister Mary had some care, instead of no care, as the Magdalene, and therefore, according to the Sermon on the Mount, the morality of the Magdalene was preferred. In the same spirit the Magdalene threw away a box of ointment, and delicacy, too, on the feet of her Master. The disciples thought it had better have been divided among the followers; but again Jesus defended the Magdalene on the principle laid down in the Sermon on the Mount. Ways and means must have been good with her, when she could afford a box of ointment. Another class from which Jesus largely recruited male and female, were the maniacs, a description of persons not a very creditable accompaniment, if Jesus himself were in his senses." It is not worth while to expose Mr. Birch's ignorant confusion of the different Marys: his insinuations as to the personal purity of our Lord, and his relation to these persons, are too coarse and too unfounded to require any other answer than

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themselves. These insinuations can only be accounted for from the character of the author; and would be inserted in no other paper than one which cantingly pretends "to sweep controversy clear of imputations," by befouling the good name of the holiest being that ever walked on earth. Do we not want an austere, as well as a mild Jesus? Yet he is as ready to forgive his slanderers, as he was to pray for his murderers. Does not Mr. Holyoake, then, do well to boast as follows of the grand benefit of Secularism—*Reasoner*, vol. xii. p. 3—"We have swept religious controversy (so far as we are concerned) free of imputation, and we appeal to every circle among the working class, where the *Reasoner* has influence, whether the tone of religious and political disputation is not higher than it was"—then it was low enough before. "Nor has this change been urged from arbitrary tastes, or in obedience to some vague sense that charity or conventional politeness requires us to be courteous. Rules have been prescribed, traced to intellectual grounds, and established in conviction which will not vary like taste, change like caprice, or go back like etiquette"—it will do very little like etiquette—"we have been alone in this advocacy, at least among the working class. Indeed, can any one name a religious or political journey anywhere which admits the same principles, or acts as implicitly upon the same rule? Is not this practical?" What can we say to men, who write as we have seen, and then glorify their special charity in a style suitable to an auction-room? Is it not plain why they defend the Pharisees?—On the principle that—

"Fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind."

Before such public teachers can do any service in the way of purifying controversy, they must "sweep their own minds clear of cant," and proceed in the same honest course as the Great Teacher whom they so shamefully abuse, as an illustration of charity, which the Editor modestly says is unrivalled out of his *Reasoner*. May he ever preserve his unenviable distinction, and never meet with a competitor, or have a successor! There are two Christs, Birch's Christ, or Holyoake's Christ, and the Christ of the Gospel.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—On a previous night I made the remark that I had no objection to the kind of opposition which Mr. Grant seemed to offer. I repeat the observation, that if those are the answers to my arguments, I have no objection whatever to his pursuing that course as long as he pleases. He may take the *Reasoner*, and I could take the Bible; or I could take Mr. Grant's

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own writings, and make a much worse account of them than he will be able to make, or than he is now doing. It is quite true, that the rules of controversy to which we have referred have been to a very great extent followed. Infallibility is not a quality which we have to claim. You may find cases in the early volumes of the *Reasoner*, in which there will be imputations which you will find denounced in the later volumes. But if you show me a violation of my own rule, I will rather accept the censure of the violation, than abandon the rule itself. If Mr. Grant would say the same, he would have to abandon very much. I am sure that, from the beginning of the *Reasoner* to this hour—nearly fourteen volumes—you cannot find half so many imputations as have been compressed into Mr. Grant's speeches during this discussion. It is in no sense true that we defend the Pharisees. It is one thing to distinguish the right application of epithets, and another to defend the crimes of any person who may be condemned. The remark about Lord Campbell I answered previously in my reference to the judge. Paul indeed said, "Who art thou who judgest another?" But did he not judge another when he said, "Let him be accursed who preaches a gospel different from ours?" St. Paul said many excellent things; but he also said many things which are not defensible, and Mr. Grant has not defended them. I have pointed out various passages showing the difference between Christ's gentler speeches and the fearful austerity of his judicial precepts. Mr. Grant has answered that by a variety of passages, which do not answer even his own description, and, if they did, would be no answer at all to my arguments. The argument about hypocrisy at church is altogether misstated. All that occurs in the passage to which he refers is this—that many persons are obliged to go to church in order to protect their relatives and friends—for they would lose their situations if they did not do so—and I did say to these people, and I will say it again, that it is their duty to resent that social injustice, and devote what means they have to putting down that cause of their hypocrisy. Now you will find the moral of Mr. Birch's paper, if you will read it, to be simply this—that if any human reformer in these days should go about the country in the same character, and accompanied in the manner described in the New Testament, you would hoot him from society. And what right have you to cherish those examples in your New Testament, and deny our right to point them out? What right have you to denounce us for not a hundredth part of the same immorality, while you cherish and defend everything which is there? You have no right to find fault with any person who shall point these things out. Well, Mr. Grant asks why is it that I interpret the case of the girl, who

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he says did not cut off her hand—but he is quite mistaken—why do I regard it as literal, or why do I not use a great number of other phrases in a literal sense? I say, that the terrible emphasis of Christ's words—that sinners should go where the worm never died, and where the fire is never quenched, and that they had better destroy some member than incur that—I say the emphasis of that language is so striking and imposing as to make persons believe it to be literal. But why should Christ not mean this, if the alternative be damnation? The sacrifice of a hand is a trifle compared with this. Now, a being cursed with passions in excess carries the elements of sin with him through life; he can never escape temptation; he has no choice between madness and falling. All tragedy recognizes this truth, for all tragedy arises out of it. If, therefore, a man's error shall expose him to eternal fire, Christ's advice, terrible as it is literally, is the only true doctrine. Where the effects are eternal misery, the literal destruction of the human cause is a mercy. I say, if your humanity rejects the literal hypothesis, where do you stop? If this amputation is metaphorical, is the eternal burning metaphorical also? If your humanity makes them both metaphors, then I am content. But do not say that I libel Christ, by making his precepts literal, while you libel God by making his eternal punishments literal. Of human language, I believe what seems to me to be true, and nothing more. If you allow me to act by the Scriptures with the same freedom, then I am content, and I have then a right to accept or reject what I please of it. If I think Christ means me to cut off my literal hand, it is because he spoke consistently with the tremendous reason he alleged for it. It is not dreadful in him to tell me to destroy my *body*, while he reserved to himself the right to destroy my *soul*. If I am to disbelieve the literal words touching my hand, I shall disbelieve the same words touching my soul. That he will burn my soul, is as repugnant to my moral sense as the injunction that I should cut off my right hand is to my physical sense. Thus I answer you, if you say eternal punishments are literal. If you make your Bible metaphorical, at this rate you may go on indefinitely, and I have no objection to your argument; for you will explain the whole of it away. But by what right do you insist upon the terrible portions of it relating to my punishment being literal, and upon others being metaphorical? Mr. Grant takes the wheat, the casting into the fire, as only an allegory. But if Christ says emphatically that he will send his angels, and gather up all that offends and burn it in unquenchable fire—if I am not to believe that to be literal, there is an end of your New Testament, for we can trust to nothing which is in it. It was this kind of argument which Mr. Grant gave us the other night,

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and which a Swedenborgian might have used. I read a passage from St. James, that the prayer of faith should save the sick; and the example of Elias was given—a man of like passions with ourselves, and who nevertheless prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it did not rain. Why does St. James give that illustration? Plainly to tell his followers that, as Elias was a man of like passions with our own, we might take encouragement, and appeal to heaven as he did. As if he had said: "If Elias under the old dispensation—following much which was traditionary, or revealed by God to mere persons—if he could do that, we, under the new dispensation, having God among us to tell us these things—surely we may call upon him, and he will hear our prayer." He used this argument in the most emphatic manner. Mr. Grant says this is merely an old Judaical allusion, and not instructive to us. I say, if you thus explain away the Scripture, you can find no fault with Strauss, you can find no fault with the Rationalists; for upon the same principle you may explain away the whole of it. It does seem to me that this is a use of language which leaves us nothing that we can trust, nothing in which we can believe. Every time—and this is the burthen of my argument—every time you defend one passage by another, every time you take me to a passage, and tell me I must not take that doctrine as literal because it seems so cruel or so immoral, you then do just what we do—you make a selection of the Bible, discarding some parts, and retaining others; and this every man must do. There is a very conflicting doctrine or precept; every wise man must put the best interpretation he can upon it, and every Christian in these days gives it the best interpretation he can. If he is right in doing that, we are equally right in the course which we take. I shall occupy the few minutes which remain in showing you that this difficulty which I have mentioned, of deciding the validity of certain portions of Scripture, is shared by persons infinitely more competent to speak upon these subjects than I am. Professor Newman, whose learning, and piety, and candour, I presume no man will dispute, in the *Phases of Faith* has this passage:—

"Have I not been twenty-five years a reader of the Bible? Have I not full eighteen years been a student of theology? Have I not employed seven of the best years of my life, with ample leisure, in this very investigation; without any intelligible earthly bribe to carry me to my present conclusions against all my prejudices and all my education? There are many far more learned than I, many men of greater power of mind; but there are also a hundred times as many who are my inferiors: and if I have been seven years labouring in vain to solve this vast literary

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problem, it is an extreme absurdity to imagine that the solving of it is imposed by God on the whole human race."

Then these are the conclusions to which he has come: "The moral advantages which we owe to Christianity have been exaggerated. We are told that Christianity is the greatest influence which has raised womankind:—this does not appear to be true. The old Roman matron was relatively to her husband morally as high as in modern Italy." "In point of fact, Christian doctrine, as propounded by Paul, is not at all so honourable to woman as that which German soundness of heart has established." "The real elevators of the female sex are the poets of Germanic culture, who have vindicated the spirituality of love, and its attraction to character." "Again: undue credit has been claimed for Christianity as the foe and extirpator of slavery. Englishmen of the nineteenth century boldly denounce slavery as an immoral and abominable system. There may be a little fanaticism in the forms which this sometimes assumes; but not one of the Christian apostles even opens his lips at all against slavery. Paul sent back the fugitive Onesimus to his master Philemon, with kind recommendations and apologies for the slave, but without a hint to the master that he ought to make him legally free. At this day, in consequence, the New Testament is the argumentative stronghold of those in the Western States of America who are trying to keep up the accursed system." "In later times, the first public act against slavery came from republican France in the madness of *Atheistic* enthusiasm, when she declared black and white men to be equally free, and liberated the negroes of Domingo. In Britain, the battle of social freedom has been fought chiefly by that religious sect which rests least on the letter of Scripture; nor, indeed, will any *wise advocate of black freedom deal much in quoting texts.* Lastly, it is a lamentable fact, that not only do superstitions about witches, ghosts, devils, and diabolical miracles, derive a strong support from the Bible (and in fact have been exploded by nothing but the advances of physical philosophy), but, what is far worse, the Bible alone has nowhere sufficed to establish an enlightened religious toleration." I might read other passages equally to the purpose, serving to show that there are parts of the Bible, which, if we do not reject, it is impossible that the working classes can maintain upon that ground of the advocacy of their freedom. Why I do not use the Bible as a book of advocacy, as I am often besought to do, is, that I find in it so much that may be honestly quoted against all social and political reform, and that passages might often come up which would confound me; I am obliged, therefore, to reject the book, in order to defend matters of importance to the public upon their own proper, independ-

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ent, natural, and moral ground; and I insist, the examples which I have read, are evidence by the way that this is the case; that we must in our own defence, and as a matter of conscience, make our selection, take those parts which are useful, rejecting those which we think will mislead.

MR. GRANT:—If Mr. Holyoake had been good enough to lay down any principle of interpretation by which we are to understand language, then he would have been of some service to us. Does he intend to say that we must treat the Scriptures in a different way from that in which we treat any other book? If he will not accept the rule I laid down—that you should treat Christianity as you treat science; that you should treat the words of Scripture as you would treat the words of conversation and of literature—if he does not accept that, he is not prepared to meet us on fair and honourable grounds. Mr. Holyoake seems to talk of my literalizing in certain passages, and he would have the same in others. He admits that he is not literal "chaff" yet, but he will have literal "fire." If he will have the one, he must have the other; he must have all or none of it. Mr. Holyoake cannot answer that, he knows. There was one word that must certainly have been a mistake; that was about "burning the soul." I confess I do not understand that. I must say a few words, as hastily as I can, upon the two Christs, to see if we cannot finish that doctrine. I have made one observation upon it, and I intended to make four; I must make the other three very rapidly. First, there are two Christs; the Christ of the Infidel, and the Christ of the Gospel. Secondly, there are two Christs in the sense of the severe and the mild Christ: severe to hypocrites; mild to those who are open, honest, and sincere. Now this is often overlooked. Sometimes they will speak of the gentleness of Christ. They forget that he was gentle to the gentle; gentle to those who were simple, honest, and honourable; but that he was severe and had anger towards those who came with cunning, towards those who sought to entrap him in his talk; then he looked round upon them with anger. And why? Because the Pharisees wished to entrap him in two things. The first was in breaking the Sabbath, because he would heal on the Sabbath-day; and those who now talk about a free Sabbath, about doing good on the Sabbath-day, are the very men who condemn Christ for condemning the Pharisaical pretensions of men in those days. There are two Christs, then, in the sense of mild and austere. Thirdly, I say, there should be two Christs, to meet the different classes of men. There is one Christ, the lowly brother to come in all sympathy; one the lordly ruler before whom we shall be

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judged. And let me tell you, in the fourth place, that there are two men in every true man. There is first the stern man of business, entering into the earnest engagements of public life; and there is the quiet, agreeable man, in relaxation, and in all social relationships. There is the stern judge upon the bench who must keep to law and fact; and there is the kindly father, the loving husband, the generous and patriotic citizen. So, then, there are two Christs—the Infidel Christ, and the Christ of the Gospel. There are two Christs—the mild and the severe. There should be two Christs, mild and severe; one for hypocrites, and the other for honest, humble persons. And every true man is two men according to the double relation in which he stands to society and to general principles. But I could not tell you how many Holyoakes there are; it would be difficult, very difficult to tell. I could enumerate for half an hour the different theories he has taken up, the different names he has assumed, and in turn abandoned. I say, I could not tell how many Holyoakes there are; I do not mean one Holyoake true to this relationship, and another true to that; but I refer to the shifting from one principle to another, and from one profession to another, until everybody must be confused who endeavours to follow him. I could only explain how many Holyoakes there are by what was stated to be the difficulty of a poor slave when he was appointed to count a number of very active animals. When he was asked whether he had counted them, he said, "No, Massa, me count 'em all but one; me couldn't count him 'cause him run about so." A few words will suffice to conclude this subject. Mr. Holyoake vainly attempted to escape the charge of double-dealing in saying that he respected the truthfulness of the prophets and apostles, by saying afterwards that he meant their "truthful purpose;" as if that was not the meaning that I gave it. We read, then, according to Mr. Holyoake, "truthful purpose," instead of "truthfulness." "We question not the truthful purpose of the prophets and apostles, but we charge Paul with craft, Peter with cunning, and Christ with juggling at a jovial party. We question not their truthful purpose, we impute not evil motives to them, but we talk of the trickery of the charlatan Christ." Is it not a miserable evasion? It is certainly consoling to find that Mr. Holyoake will at least tolerate a few New Testament passages; we are very much obliged to him; but in this noble eclecticism (which we usually call plagiarism) we have an illustration of refined liberality. Here is one instance, Mr. Holyoake observes, of a lecturer, that "a slight and ingenious touch of loyalty was introduced; but of religious terms not a technical word was obtruded, though the subject might easily have been directed to that end. The lecturer's taste

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in this respect was as cultivated as his scientific acquirements were conspicuous." This extreme repugnance to Christianity, leads him to look for it everywhere, and to be thankful when he does not find it, though he carries its shadow with him. When reproving the strong language of "Chartist denunciation," Mr. Holyoake takes occasion to introduce a topic which is often dragged in by him. He will excuse these stump orators, that he may insult prophets, apostles, and the Redeemer, saying, "But let not the blame rest on them (the chartist orators); the Hebrew prophets, Jesus Christ himself and the apostles also set them the dangerous example." (vol. xii. p. 371). Mr. Holyoake is very tender towards the Pharisees, and very severe on the Saviour, and this even in that case where they endeavoured to entrap him in his talk, to accuse him either of sedition or of blasphemy; and when the Saviour foiled this smooth and malignant conspiracy against his life, there is no reproof for these conspirators but an insult on the answer they received as "the trickery of the charlatan Christ." Let none, therefore, be surprised if an ill use be made by such men of honest and truthful sayings. Let us only be thankful that they find some good in "the charlatan Christ," and bring a few fragments from the wrecks of reason to overturn Christ's morality by agreeing with it. The extreme and respectful liberality of Mr. Holyoake towards the Saviour is farther manifest from the following:—Mr. Thomas Cooper thus writes:—"My dear Holyoake, I read the following words in your *Reasoner* this morning:—'Cooper's Journal abounds in eulogies upon the character of Christ so extravagant and fulsome that they must be particularly distasteful to Christ if he is conscious of it.' Will you point them out, and show me how they are so extravagant and fulsome that they must be particularly distasteful to Christ if he *be* conscious of it?" (Vol. x. p. 53). The answer to this is a gem, and quite in Mr. Holyoake's way of supporting his assertions:—"Instead of writing, that '*Cooper's Journal* abounds,' I believe I wrote that the editor of '*Cooper's Journal* abounds, &c." This very periphrastic description was deprived of the word "editor," through Mr. Holyoake's not correcting the press. And does this answer the question? No; but it evades it, and that answers the end; for he adds, "My object was not to attack Mr. Cooper's views, but to defend him against the *Ayr Observer*, by citing his *extreme* admiration of Christ, which is very remarkable in a man of his penetration." (Vol. x. p. 214). Now Mr. Holyoake had not "cited" it, he only asserted it; and instead of defending the assertion, he assumes it, and declares it was in "defence" of Mr. Cooper, whom he complaments for "penetration," and passes off on him this bad answer, which amounts to

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an imputation on his discernment; which is praised to blindfold it; and the argument is completed by a compliment to Thomas Cooper, and an insult to our Redeemer. Mr. Holyoake has one method of aiming at effect by a kind of logic, that he calls humanity; in other words, an appeal to the feelings of his hearers, whilst condemning Christianity for not solely cultivating the judgment; so he brings in not a text of Scripture on the atonement, but some crude antagonism of a disbeliever in the doctrine; and employs this opponent of it, to set up a central gallows, as a horrifyingly calm appeal to the judgment of the audience, as to the moral relation to mankind of the voluntary, heroic, and ever-glorious sufferings of the Redeemer; whose cross was not a scaffold of his Father, demanding a Son's life, but the bigotry of a Jewish mob, and the cunning malice of those Pharisees whom Mr. Holyoake so often defends against the extreme severity of the Saviour's rebukes: these, aided by the Secular truckling of a weak, cowardly, Roman governor, erected that cross, an instrument of torture that Christianity did not invent; whilst the Saviour willingly suffered, called forth no power to overcome his enemies but the power of unparalleled love, leaving the world with the jeers of court menials and profane witlings in his ears, but with these words on his lips, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Nor can there be a more perfect instance of "crucifying the Son of God afresh," than by thus traducing the grandest passage in the world's history into an "immoral example," whilst Infidels themselves must regard it as an insult on their own understandings for a leader of theirs to represent this judicial murder, done by Jews and Romans, as the unfatherly severity of God, "who spared not his own Son" indeed, but not in Mr. Holyoake's sense of unpitying severity, but in the New Testament sense of not withholding him, "but freely giving him up for us all," as he freely came—not as an instance of severity, but as a pledge of mercy; whilst "God raised him from the dead, and gave him glory," the reward of his pains; as in his providence he raises again the names of persecuted and maligned martyrs, to crown them with honour on earth; and to give them a spiritual kingdom in human reverence, as the outbeaming of that glory which they enjoy in heaven. It was the Jews "who by wicked hands crucified and slew" the Saviour; it was God who changed their crown of thorns for a crown of glory; reversed their verdict, and made the crucified Saviour the Lord of life and glory, and turned the greatest crime of man into a lasting occasion of the free mercy of God to the vilest of mankind. This is Christianity; Mr. Holyoake's opposition to it, is evasion, conjecture, and caricature; for which, indeed, he needs the poetry of Aquinas on the

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devil, and of some other saint on Robert Owen. If this had been a contest of poetry and sentiment, instead of reason and argument—(Laughter).—Wait a little, and laugh after. If you laugh before you hear what I say, you are not wise. I say, if this had been a contest of poetry and sentiment, instead of reason and argument, then I had better have graduated in Young's *Night Thoughts*, Pollock's *Course of Time*, and Graham's *Sabbath*, instead of studying the Gospel and the *Reasoner*, as the only suitable things for this discussion. The sophistry of these appeals to the feelings, against a scarecrow of Mr. Holyoake's invention, is not less obvious in the diversion so perseveringly made, from the doctrine of salvation to the doctrine of damnation, from all danger of which the atonement is to free us. The argument was like that of a man who should discuss the value of a remedy, and prove its "immorality" by showing how fearful were the consequences of not receiving it, saying that it is not merely a means of health we are to consider, but the danger I am threatened with if I do not follow this prescription. Then the physician's skill and kindness are turned into hatred and severity; for does he not say, If I do not believe in him, I shall die? Do I deserve this? Therefore the remedy is "immoral" because the consequences of rejecting it are dangerous: whilst, strictly speaking, the rational patient would die of his disease—not the physician's punishment for his want of faith, but his own disease's revenge on his own folly. He was in danger before the physician came. The physician did not invent the danger. So the world was in danger without Christ. He did not introduce any of the evils, but he came only to restore us from our evils, and to tell us how to escape out of every danger, whatever it might be. If we reject it, and put it from us, and count ourselves unworthy of eternal life, we are our own judges—we adjudge ourselves unfit for this eternal life—and that is our own act.

The umpire announced that the subject of the sixth and last discussion, to take place next Thursday, would be, the 'General Advantages of Secularism;" but Mr. Grant objected, saying that he did not know what was meant by the phrase. The subject had not been accepted by him, and was not mentioned in the correspondence, therefore he should certainly not discuss it. Mr. Holyoake took no notice of the objection, and thus the meeting separated.

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THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 24, 1853.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen,—At the conclusion of the debate upon the assumed "benefits of Secularism," it seems to me a proper course to pursue, to state retrospectively what those benefits have been, as they have been set forth in this controversy, and our personal relation to what has been said. Recognizing how often men who mean well, act ill, and think erroneously, we make it a rule to avoid, as far as possible, imputing evil motives to others; and that my own writings and speeches do not often offend in this respect, you have proof, or Mr. Grant would not have been under the necessity of searching so widely the articles of others for instances; nor can my opponent condemn the epithets of others he professes to have found, by any rule of his own, for if he is justified in his own use of epithets, he cannot condemn their use in others. He comes to us for the very rule on which he founds his objections to the cases he has cited. But it is worthy of remark, that Mr. Grant calls *his* use of epithets "honest indignation." He forgets that the clergy, for half a century, have denounced Thomas Paine as "coarse and abusive," for the use of less than one-twentieth part of the imputations which Mr. Grant has employed in this single discussion. Mr. Grant overlooked last week, that when the Christian says, Christ is a perfect model for human imitation, it gives us a right to ask, What would Christians say to any one in these days, who should act in some respects like him? Now I say, without fear of contradiction, that Christians would denounce any public man as a "juggler and charlatan" who should imitate Christ's conduct in some particulars; and this is the amount of all Mr. Birch or Mr. Bell has said of Paul, Peter, or Christ: a very different thing from what was represented. Of Mr. Birch's "Enquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakespere," I need only say, that every line is as honest as it is manly and impartial; and had the author, in his constant defence of freedom of opinion, chosen to wear a mask, Mr. Grant would not have been able to have mentioned his name. In the present progress of our opinions, exposition is more to us than personal defence; and therefore I

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take little notice of the copious personalities which Mr. Grant continues to introduce into this debate; but to show how little we have to fear on this head, I shall, in the *Reasoner*, make a list of them, and go through them week by week, and answer such as may seem worthy of the trouble. But here I have a higher duty to perform, namely, to bring forward every night an exposition of the subject agreed to be discussed. This course, to the best of my judgment, I have steadily pursued, and in this course I shall continue to the last minute of this discussion. Therefore to the various reiterated and incoherent accusations made against us, it is enough at this point to say, that our lives are an answer to all who know us, and our writings will be an answer to all who can look into them. We need not ask to be believed on this matter: it is sufficient that we ask to be read.

Throughout this discussion, our adversary has addressed us in the tone which marked our previous correspondence; and he has been the first minister whom I have been obliged to refuse to meet in private; for should he have addressed to me similar language at my own table, the custom of society would have obliged me to resent it. Of course, under these circumstances, we shall, whether in public or private, know how to protect ourselves. We will forgive these things, and forget them, but we will not willingly communicate with any one who seems disposed to repeat them. But this resolution shall not betray us into indiscriminate opposition. While we oppose Christian error, we will respect Christian truth. We may deem the zeal of the Christian minister ill-employed, and that the devotion of the Sunday-school teacher, useful as in some respects it is, might be put to a better purpose. We may question this application of these talents, but we trust not to confound benevolence of intention with errors of belief.

With a view to test the practical value of Secularism, it was one night demanded, What have we accomplished? It is forgotten, we submit, under what disadvantages we labour. Once cast your lot with heretical truth, and you are liable to have your name printed with opprobrium, and carried from door to door in Evangelical tracts, or made to point the moral of the lowest and most illiterate Methodist sermon. The honours of society are closed against you; your employer dismisses you; there is no Christian so low but he may insult you, no Christian so ignorant but he may be preferred before you; you may work for the public, but never receive the credit of it; your name is suppressed or objected to in all public committees; you are jostled from the political platform, often avoided by the Member of Parliament, lest you should prevent the adhesion of the religious party to the cause; you are not invited to the public assembly, nor deemed

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presentable at the evening party; even in the market of literature you must work anonymously; men will live upon your brains (with a few generous exceptions), and disown your name; in your youth you are forced into obscurity because of your opinions, and in your old age you are neglected because you are unknown. Worse still, drunkenness and debauchery are imputed to your belief; all crime is laid at your door; every outrage in the world is associated with your name, and the death-beds of your friends is the unfeeling theme on which the pastor will descant. Nor are we better heard than treated; our books are excluded from the library and reading-room; the religious newspaper will not admit our defence; the religious publisher will not publish it; the religious bookseller will not sell it; the religious journal will not advertise it. Nor is the State more liberal than the citizen; the judge refuses to take our oaths; and men of wealth, who adopt our opinions, endanger their possessions by doing so. Wherever property has been left for the promotion of our objects, in London, Manchester, France, Cork, America, judges have declared it left for "an immoral purpose," and the triumphant Christian has carried it away for his own uses. Whatever the testimony of a man's conscience may be, he must die under the profession of the Christian name, or his survivors may suffer. Every charity in the kingdom is in the receipt of contributions from free-thinkers, the credit of which the Christian claims, because the donors must accept that designation in order to preserve social status. The Christian refuses us the protection of the laws; he causes the law to deny us freedom while living, and to plunder us when we are dead, and then he turns round and demands "what fruit the trees of our opinions have borne." Yet there have been few movements of which history makes mention, or which exist around us, for political freedom or secular progress, in which the names may not be found among the pioneers of those belonging to our side. However, you claim everything, when once established, as proceeding from Christianity. But the world is sick of that vanity, and criticism is sick of the error. Whatever exists in *spite* of Christianity is by some persons derived from it. When, as in the struggle for freedom of speech conducted in the days of Richard Carlile, we had to fight Christianity for every inch of ground we won, there were not wanting people, when the battle was over, to turn round and assure the world that the victory over Christianity was a Christian victory; and I have no manner of doubt, that if Christianity should be entirely overthrown, there will be found Christians who will claim the victory. We therefore will consume no time in defending our exertions, or in contesting the independence of our truths. Let us establish the truths themselves, and history

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will settle the rest. These leading principles I shall again briefly re-state.

That central point in all religious belief,—the existence of God, has not yet been approached in a frank spirit. The very terms of the assertion are as yet an enigma in language—the fact is yet a problem in philosophy. Unchastened instinct has assumed that proposition, imperious authority has announced it, and intolerant bigotry has fenced it from inquiry by penalties and opprobrium, and the world possesses as yet no adequate logic for that province of our speculation which lies beyond our immediate experience. Our particular inability to attain to the desired solution, and our attempt to walk by an independent light, you describe by the term "atheism," a name which associates guilt with dissent. It is quite true that till very lately we used this priest-made term; but when we clearly found that we were spending our time in re-educating the public in the right meaning of a negative term, when we might be educating them in positive principles, we declined any longer to employ a name, which, as understood by Christians, distorted and falsified our objects wherever it was heard. We therefore resolved to choose a new name (Secularism), which should express the practical and moral element always concealed in the word Atheism. Our opponent has represented this as an abandonment of our principles. The advantage of the change to us is so great, that we will leave him with this innocent satisfaction. Now, Secularism seeks the personal Law of duty, the Sphere of duty, and the Power by which duty may work independently. The Law is found in natural, utilitarian, and artistic morals. The Sphere is this, to work with our first energies in this life, for this life—for its growth, culture, development, and progress. The Power is discovered in science, the Providence of life, and intelligence. The problem solved by secularism is this, that this partially comprehended and unexplored universe is yet, in its material and ascertainable relations to man, a possible theatre of the limitless happiness of humanity—that the light of duty may be seen, that a life of usefulness may be led, indefinite refinement may be attained, and tranquillity in death, and the highest desert in untried existence beyond us may be won, though the Origin of all things shall be hidden from us, and the Revelations of every religious sect shall be rejected. Christianity is offered to us as the absolute rule of life, and as the means of salvation. The practical question, then, is—What are they to do who cannot conscientiously accept Christianity as a whole? Is good citizenship, private virtue, and pleasant desert in death possible to them? Secularism answers in the affirmative, and it answers thus:—This

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world being the only world known to us, the duties of this life, the duties of man to man, should have the precedence in time and importance, as no other duties can be ascertained or conceived which can be more acceptable to a just God than those which relate to the purity and happiness of his creatures. There can be no question as to the benefits accruing from this comprehensive view of secular duty. Half the philanthropic effort of the whole world is devoted to preparations for the next world, instead of being devoted to the cultivation of humanity in this. Nor are we mere theorists on this head. Our secular principle is found in our practice. One night Mr. Grant asked, What have we done for Italy? While you, perhaps, prayed for it, the readers of the *Reasoner* subscribed and collected some 2200 shillings for it, which is more than has been subscribed by all the chapels and religious periodicals in the country, though the aid of all has been solicited. Now, had British Christians taken the same interest in the secular welfare of European freedom as we did, they might have collected a million shillings. You parade your efforts to procure the Madiais the liberty of reading the Bible; had you displayed equal interest in secular politics, and prevented the French troops from occupying Rome, Italy itself would be free, and Catholicism would be prostrate. Our efforts are an answer to the gross imputation that Secularism is sensual. Our aims have been different from the Christian's, in being more practical; but they have not been less pure or less lofty; for the struggle for liberty, in which we have ever been foremost, is at least as noble as putting obstacles in the way of it; for what popular movement is there which has not had to fight its way through the dark and serried ranks of the clergy, Established and Dissenting? The working classes throughout Europe, who struggle for freedom, are with us, because they know that in the hour of danger we alone are with them. Nor are we less the friends of morals than we are of freedom. With the Christian, good works are ever secondary to credal faith; else why do you disparage that morality which is unconnected with Christianity? If you have no arbitrary faith, as Mr. Grant said—if faith merely means confidence in the grounds of action—you sink Faith in Reason, and Secularism is as much the true faith as yours; and the Apostles were wrong in telling us to seek justification by faith in Christ. But the doctrine announced in this discussion is not the doctrine of Paul, and we confer a great benefit on the people by justifying every act of humanity, independently of sectarian belief. If you can get the understanding to accept one narrow dogma called faith in Christ, you establish an authority over that mind to accept such morals

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as you have to teach. We, by establishing morals independently of Scriptural authority, and basing them on secular considerations —more immediate, more demonstrative and universal—attain a signal benefit; for when Inspiration is shaken, or Miracles fail you, or Prophecy eludes the believer, he breaks away, and probably falls into vice; while we hold the thinker by the thousand relations of Natural affection, Utility, and Intelligence, which the Christian distrusts. You serve two masters, Faith and Work, and Faith with you is the Lord of Work; we serve but one master, and him we serve with singleness of purpose. According to the New Testament, good works can only proceed from one faith, faith in Christ, and without that one faith you say men perish eternally; we teach that good works may proceed from divers faiths or convictions, and that all faiths that are sincere are honourable, and that all fruit that is wholesome is meritorious. A man may do good because it is honest, because it is useful, because it is commanded by human law, because it is human, because it is politic, because it is a noble pleasure. Good works may proceed from tendency, from sympathy, from reflection, from philosophy; we may be incited to good works by ancient moralists, by modern teachers; incentives may come from the arts, from the sciences, from nature. Good works may therefore proceed from a hundred different faiths or convictions, and each be innocent in the sight of man, and a justification in the sight of a discerning God. But the faith spoken of by the apostles, the faith in Christ, has but one source, and means but one thing, and that alone, in the Christian's opinion, can justify him. Such faith, therefore, is narrow, is a fetter, while good works are limitless, and include freedom, growth, development, service, humanity, innocence. We therefore accept in the New Testament whatever favours works, but decline that which binds us to a sectarian faith, and say with Pope—

> "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

It was asked, What has Secularism done for man? Now, Secularism is merely the general name by which we represent those material agencies which work together for human welfare, of which science is the chief. The proper question therefore is, What has Science done for man? And civilization itself gives the answer. But when you return to the question, What has Christianity done? you are reminded how, at least, it has always opposed science, and how science has had to make its way in spite of Christianity. It is quite true that the Christian employs science; he employs it more and more every year; but it is a contradiction to the Scrip-

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tural theory of Providence; and if the Scriptures be true, Science may be superseded by Prayer. And this feeling is so general, that Christianity has always been found to be antagonistic to, or distrustful of, science. Like Cardinal Wiseman, it claims science when science has triumphed, but like Catholicism it has first opposed it. Standing lately by a railway station in Yorkshire, I asked for one known there. The answer was, "He has died of consumption, through cold; leaving the mill, he would go, in his praying days, ill-clad, through the night air. When remonstrated with, his brave reply was, 'He who can save my soul can save me from taking cold.'" He believed the promise of Christ, and he died; he had faith, and he perished. Men tell still of his simple and courageous reliance on Providence, and they point to his grave. Our opponent will say, this young Christian had "perverted notions of prayer and Providence." He may say it, but saying so is but denying the Scriptures. It is nothing to the purpose to tell us that prayer will not kill men, since it may cause them to be killed who trust to it. As science does sometimes save from temporal ill, and prayer never, we shall all be benefited when scientific discourses supersede Evangelical sermons, which only give us false motives and no help. The highest inspiration and the noblest motives lie in the consciousness of performing noble acts. In *The Bible and the People*, Mr. Grant has said,—"If a question be scientific the Bible does not pretend to touch it." Then Christianity is not of so much advantage to the working classes as Secularism, which does pretend to touch it; and this is a great benefit of Secularism, which is both logical and peculiar.

MR. GRANT:—We might suppose, from Mr. Holyoake's speech, that the "benefits of Secularism" mean the accusation of Christians, and the misrepresentation of Christianity. There was one statement made by Mr. Holyoake with which I perfectly agree, namely, that if Christianity should be entirely overthrown, he has no doubt that some Christians would be found to claim the victory. I quite agree with him, because, first, infidels have not been able to overthrow it, and therefore *they* will not have the credit; and secondly, because it never will be overthrown, and therefore *nobody* will have the credit. Mr. Holyoake says that his system is, to work first in this world, and for this world. I suppose he think we work first in the next world, and that our duties for the next world are not the duties of this world. Now I should like Mr. Holyoake in his next speech to prove what he said lately, that a man believed the promise of Christ, and so died. If Mr. Holyoake will quote the promise, I will give up

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this discussion. Mr. Holyoake says in the *Reasoner* (Vol. III. p. 338), "Scotland is the stronghold of Calvinism—the head-quarters of bigotry—one of the most priest-ridden countries of modern Europe [of course he uses no epithets]: the first intellectual inhalations of her children are from an atmosphere of sectarian religion." We could not have a better proof that this religion is no enemy of intelligence, science, and industry; for the Scotch travel everywhere, rise to high positions in science, commerce, and politics wherever civilization extends. I will just give you one other case. Speaking of Newton, who certainly had a little science, Mr. Holyoake says that he was "a driveller in religion," and that, "above all men in the logic of mathematics, he was below all in the logic of divinity." That is the compliment paid to Newton. This is hopeful for scientific regeneration, and is also a proof of Mr. Holyoake's courtesy out of debate. In one place he says, "the more priests study science and literature, the wiser and more liberal must they become." So that Newton was not "a driveller;" and Dr. Wiseman, who is as scientific as Mr. Holyoake, is "wise and liberal." Our question is, "What benefits will accrue to mankind in general, and the working-classes in particular, by the removal of Christianity, and the substitution of Secularism in its place?" It must be a secularism Christianity opposes; therefore it cannot be science, which Christians best know how to cultivate and appreciate. Secularism, as the discovery of moral truth and social duties apart from Christianity, must be judged of before Christianity came. Secularism has been on trial, and we have the results in the history of the world. Experience is a safer guide than the vague promises of men who have never done anything but promise. To know the value of any system, we must consider the needs of the world when it was introduced,—whether the world was better without it, and has grown worse since, wherever it has prevailed. Some useful hints on this point occur in *The Bible and the People*, under the title of "the relation of Christianity to other systems in the age in which it originated." Neander, the church historian, says of Christianity, "It is that new creation whose progressive work became thenceforth the problem and the goal of history. It is, therefore, only from its historical connexion with that portion of mankind among whom Christianity at first appeared, that its effects can be rightly understood; and such a connected view of the subject is necessary, in order to clear the way of false explanations." The relation of the Gospel was peculiar to the Jewish system, as meeting its supernatural pre-intimations and prophecies; it also came not to destroy, but to fulfil all truth at the bottom of all religions. To complete the fulness of time, "the three great his-

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torical nations had to contribute, each in its own peculiar way, to prepare the soil for the planting of Christianity,—the Jews on the side of the religious element; the Greeks on the side of art; and the Romans as masters of the world on the side of the political element." The process of decay had commenced in the two leading peoples, the Greeks and the Romans; nor could there have been any permanent advance amongst mankind without some new and preservative element. "All national greatness depends on the tone of public feeling, and this on the power of religion in the life of a people. But the popular religions of antiquity answered only for *a certain stage* of culture. When the nations in the course of their progress had passed beyond this, the consequence was, a dissevering of the spirit from the religious tradition. There was yet no salt to preserve the life of humanity from decomposing, or to restore it back again when passing to decomposition." Hence many efforts had begun to be made by the philosophical and patriotic to patch up a union between the decaying superstitions and the growing intellect. Plato, so often referred to by infidels as having laid the foundation of Christianity, saw that even the superstitions in which he did not believe, were necessary till a true religion should arise, for which he longed, and which should meet the deeper wants of human nature. But even Plato had nothing to present meanwhile that should partially satisfy the general needs of mankind; though he attempted something for the more philosophical, and could only leave the masses in contented ignorance. The same schism arose in the more cultivated Roman minds, between the old religions and growing intelligence. Polybius gives us a similar account of the religious state of the Roman world a century and a half before Christ. "There were no means of creating a fellowship of religious interest on truthful grounds between the cultivated class and the people." Strabo, the geographer, who wrote in the age of Augustus Cæsar, declares that philosophy (the compromise set up between superstition and scepticism) was ineffectual for the common people: they all regarded these as necessarily condemned to the leading-strings of ignorance and delusion, it being reckoned unsafe to enlighten them, against the old religions, in the absence of a new, better, and true one. Thus by the advance of philosophy, deceit became the cement of society; only Christianity banished this, and brought the same truth for the wise and the unwise, Greek and barbarian, bond and free. There was a general feeling of vacillation and scepticism throughout the whole of society; and this spread, we are told, to those who had not studied the systems from which they received those principles, till epicureanism and scepticism, a life of pleasure and a state of mental indecision, pre-

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vailed; and amidst foreign superstition brought to Rome, together with the debates of contending philosophers, they joined the sneer of Pilate against all sincerity and principle—"What is truth?" It was just being revealed when the world was ripe for it. Meanwhile, those who thought some religion necessary, and none existing true, dealt in dead abstractions, and instead of idol gods, made a god who was idle, and sat apart from all interest in human affairs; this was the stoic's god, the deification of a heartless philosophy, the apotheosis of stoicism. The elder Pliny saw the failure of all human effort, which he expressed in these doleful words,—"The vanity of man, and his insatiable longing after existence, have led him to dream of a life after death. A being full of contradictions, he is the most wretched of creatures; since the other creatures have no wants transcending the bounds of their nature. Man is full of desires and wants that reach to infinity and can never be satisfied. His nature is a lie,—uniting the greatest poverty with the greatest pride. Among those so great evils, the best thing God has bestowed on man is the power to take his own life." They do say that Christianity makes men melancholy; but this culminating point of the religion of nature, this true primitive secularism, smiles a very ghastly smile. It is really mournful to read the tone of comfort here afforded; and the elevation, or rather premature termination, of this life, by an exclusion of the next. See the grand harmony of this doctrine: man alone is an enigma, his nature alone is dissatisfied with its condition; he alone is a contradiction and a lie; the beasts are at home; they are satisfied in this life, and expect no other. This is the original secularism, cold, melancholy, suicidal; and stands as the tale of man's nature—(for he is ever the same)—in favour of that immortality which is brought to light in the Gospel. Surely this was indited in the fulness of time, when men groped for the "unknown God," and were like an eagle beating his wings against a cage, with longings which only the wide firmament can satisfy; hopes and aspirations which secularism can only extinguish in a black night of hopelessness and desperate suicide. At this stage three forms of philosophy prevailed, those of the stoic and epicurean sects, with some of whose followers Paul met at Athens, and the followers of Plato. Epicureanism, the philosophy of pleasure, was accepted by such as, in the description of St. Paul, said, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. The Stoical philosophy attracted those of cold and gloomy temperament; it cherished a stern and lofty pride, which retired into mental independence and indifference, from outward evils and the loss of liberty: the wise man boasted his equality to Jupiter. His highest prerogative was the one mentioned by Pliny—the privilege of

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suicide. Its God did not care for man, and its followers did not care for him. Death was their cure for all ills, and they resorted to it in pride and despair. The other form of philosophy recognised man's spiritual wants, and sought in all religions to find that inward meaning hidden under the superstitious element. This was the philosophy of Plato; but even Plato was not prepared to do anything for the masses of the people. This is well described by the historian Neander, and indicates the fact, that before Christianity gave the idea, no one thought of forming a system of enlightenment that should extend to the people:—"The higher religious position which necessarily supposed philosophical culture, could not be transferred to the multitude; *they* seemed as if excluded from the higher life, capable of religion only in the form of superstition. The great body of tradesmen and mechanics were considered as unsusceptible of the higher life. And in like manner it was remote from the aim of this new philosophy of religion to elevate the people to any higher stage of religious development: for which, indeed, it was destitute of the means. Plotinus distinguished two different stages: that of the noble-minded, and that of the gross multitude. It was not till the word that went forth from the carpenter's shop had been published abroad by fishermen and tent-makers, that these aristocratic notions of the ancient world could be overthrown." In this we see the contrast between Christianity and the highest reach of philosophy: the one avoids, the other seeks the people. The one avoids them as hopeless, and has nothing for them; the other declares, "to the poor the Gospel is preached." The one forms schools of select philosophers; the other records this new phenomenon, —"The common people heard him gladly." And the very terms employed by philosophers as excluding the masses—the many—those to whom they do not speak, are used in the gospel for those to whom it does speak. Whilst philosophers say, that "the many" are beyond their mission and their help, "the Son of man (the brother of all men) came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many." And finally, Paul, the universal apostle, declares, "I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." The contrast is therefore perfect: Christianity undertook the only mission to the masses; philosophy had nothing to say to them, could do nothing for them; it passed them by and turned to the polite and aristocratic; it was Christ alone who had anything to say of universal interest to awaken the attention and affections of all classes of men; and advanced a universal message, "Go ye into all the world and preach the

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gospel to every creature." And whilst the philosophers were right in perceiving that their speculations could not lay hold of the people, and become a permanent element of social life—Christianity has vindicated its universal aims, by meeting the wants of the highest and the lowest, the philosopher and the rustic, the rich and the poor, especially in lifting men from the lowest moral and physical degradation to character and comfort, contentedness and real respectability. "Celsus, the first writer against Christianity, sneers at the fact that wool-workers, cobblers, leather-dressers, the most illiterate and vulgar of mankind, were zealous preachers of the gospel, and addressed themselves particularly in the outset to women and children." Here we have another mark of the gospel's universal benefits—it regarded children, it educates them in Sabbath schools, in most sects it baptizes them; and the Founder of Christianity bestowed upon them marks of special regard; whilst everywhere the result has been to raise woman to her true position by the side of man, as his companion, for "in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female"—but all are one; equally cared for and equally honoured. Thus from a historical point of view we find, that the old superstitions were dying out and the little morality they supported was giving way; that accordingly the nations were entering upon a decline, which was vainly attempted to be arrested by an artificial faith in the philosophers, and a blind faith in the people: that Christianity appeared in the fulness of time—at the right moment—to unite intellect and devotion, and thus to secure morality, together with national and social progress, the perpetuation of all the improvements of society. It not only united conscience and intellect, but reconciled the philosopher and aristocrat to the poor and uneducated; and taught the world, for the first time, that the masses are not to be despised, but that men have equal claims. It thus started a true democracy, not of citizen masters, as in Athens and Rome—the old oligarchal constitutions falsely called republics—but of man's equality under God, and our common relation to an immortal destiny. It met the longings of mankind, expressed in all forms of superstition, mournfully uttered in the suicide of the Stoics, and the sad tale of the Elder Pliny, who, in the name of philosophy, proclaimed the unsatisfactory position of man, as having desires that reach into eternity, whilst his best privilege is that he can destroy his life; whilst Christianity comes to give a heaven of eternal happiness opened freely to all, to rich and poor. It met the spiritual necessities of the world, confessed in the philosophy of the Platonists, expressed in the superstitions of all nations—the necessity for some human manifestation of the Divine—not by stones

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and rude emblems, or works of the highest art, but in a living human character, that may be understood by all, and become a household word of joy and peace and hopefulness. The name of one, who, though a king, will enter the lowliest cottage, and raise the roof as his presence changes every house into a palace, and every believer into a king and priest unto God for ever. And whilst philosophers, legislators, and infidels, fostered popular superstitions, some from a belief in the usefulness to morals, some from reasons of state, some from indifferenee to truth—Christianity came without regard to state necessity, without compliance to popular delusions, to utter a truth that should elevate both freeman and serf, and establish justice as the rule of government, love as the law of life. And since, in the effort to bolster up superstition, pretended prodigies were performed, it wrought real miracles, without which it would not have gained the notice of mankind, and uttered principles equally miraculous, but without which it would have gained no permanent hold on the affections of men; and thus it alone breathed new life into decaying humanity; corrected and repressed the universal growth of the most debasing immorality, and gave an impulse to that tide of improvement, which, in spite of all opposing agencies, the cunning of priests and the power of tyrants, has worked hitherto, and still remains the germ of every improvement, the inextinguishable hope of mankind, for all personal character, social and political amelioration. The sick nations had received many nostrums from many secular advisers, but were not yet improved; priests, philosophers, legislators—all had received their fees; the patient was impoverished in purse and constitution, and had been turned out as incurable; like "a certain woman who had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind and touched the hem of his garment, and felt in her body that she was healed of that plague." (Mark v. 25—29.)

This rapid sketch teaches how little was done before Christianity, and how much it was needed as the great and sole light of the world, the regenerating element of society. Everything else had failed; and human reason, which, according to atheistic ideas, had been at work from all eternity, ended in looseness of thought and morals, scepticism, superstition, and debasement. The gospel is the first system that recognises the people, cares for them, and appeals to them. It has introduced into all modern literatures the ideas of our common human dignity, the importance and sacredness of every man, from which free-thinkers have selected the doctrine of human brotherhood, which never existed

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till Christ came as the brother of all men. Secularists invent a steam engine and discover gas in 1853, find out doctrines of social duty, freedom and equality, after Christianity has taught them; whilst we have constantly an accession of tribes and nations to the civilized world who were without a literature and without the arts of life, till the New Testament became the basis of a written language, and the spring of a moral character. Infidelity has done nothing of this kind, and can do nothing but in the *Cabinet of Reason* accuse Christians of spending money on heathen and foreign savages. This is your brotherhood of men, this is your estimate of Christian charity, enterprise, and heroism. In Christianity there are no foreigners; it tells us who is our neighbour—(but not who is a foreigner)—even a man of another nation and another religion,—he is our neighbour. Free-thinkers have adopted the term brotherhood, but this narrowness of the secular standard is a proof that they have not even learned to understand it. Till the year one, the family of free-thinkers never had a penny of their own; they were always poor, and with all their boast of riches every piece in their possession is a marked coin, stolen from our till, and stamped in our mint, but defaced in theirs. (Interruption.) The facts already glanced at —(renewed interruption, cheers, and hisses.)

MR. MORLEY:—I am anxious to renew my entreaty, my appeal, against that contemptible sound, a hiss. (Interruption.)

MR. SYME:—Allow me to say to Mr. Grant himself, that if he will avoid—(confusion and interruption.) I merely rise to a point of order. I am not going to make any remark. (Renewed interruption.)

MR. GRANT:—The facts already glanced at prove that till Christ came to teach social and moral truths, men had everywhere failed to discover and practise them. (Uproar.)

MR. SYME:—What I wished to say before was—(cries of "Sit down," &c.)

THE UMPIRE:—Will the company like to have two minutes' fresh air? (Applause.)

The room having been ventilated for a few minutes—

MR. GRANT proceeded:—Men had enjoyed abundance of time, since, according to atheism, there was no first man, for it allows of no Creator. Nor need we a greater demonstration of what is

the true cause of progress, than a comparison of all the results of human effort till Christ, and all the nations where the gospel is not received, with the eighteen centuries in which Christian nations alone have progressed in every science and art, in commerce, enterprise, charity, freedom, and morality. All the rest of mankind have been imitating Mr. Holyoake, as they have "milked the barren heifer" of Secularism, as he does now, whilst the reporter holds the sieve. He says truly of Robert Owen, that he is a grand dreamer; and Mr. Holyoake is a grand promiser; but Christianity is the grand worker. One fills the confiding with vain hopes; the other has filled the civilized world with enduring monuments, the deeds of the past as the hopes of the future. But if all previous efforts failed—as even Mr. Holyoake must admit, or he should quote a system from the old philosophy, instead of a few sentimentalities from *Chambers's Popular Confucius*, by which he is open to a contrast between China and England—if all failed before Christ, we can easily trace what has been accomplished since. This new religion was not only the first to begin honestly to care for the masses, recognizing the common dignity of all men, but it inspired a new feeling of dignity and mental independence in the minds of those who before were spiritual and civil serfs. It was truly observed by St. Augustine, "Christ appeared to the men of a decrepit dying world, that while all around was fading, they might through him receive a new youthful life." This gospel infused a new spirit of heroism into the common character, teaching Roman citizens to abandon the religion of the state, in spite of the laws; and this was the taunt against them, that their religion was "not licensed." They preceded and created all toleration acts, and will finally repeal them for a free equality act, to amend all others. Paganism at Rome was tolerant of the gods of conquered nations; they were the ornaments of the Pantheon; all dwelt in harmony, because they were local traditions; whilst Christianity being truthful and conscientious, not only taught its followers to submit to no enforcement against conscience, but was necessarily of an aggressive nature. It could not advise to go to the temple and pay penance to an infidel leader; it was an Ishmael, as truth ever must be, and hence was hated because it was a new conscientious power of individual and popular independence. The cry of the philosopher and the priest was, "Every man should obey the religion of his fathers." That of the statesman was, "Every one should obey the religious laws of his country." That of the Christian was, "We must obey the law of God and our conscience at all risks." This was the new development of individual independence against state and priest, the secret of all progress, and the battle-cry of

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this generation, which will be re-echoed till mental independence is established, in a true protesting against all human despotism. It is true there have been of late a few instances of imprisonment for infidel opinions, a thing against which we protest as a disgrace to the Christian religion; this has happened by the laws of the state, not by the laws of Christ. Nor have the martyrs of infidelity much to boast of. It is vain to deny that there are hundreds of assertions about the thousands who, to avoid social degradation or pecuniary loss, conform to a religion they are said to despise. There may be exceptions, but they are exceptions. And according to Mr. Holyoake's account, infidel leaders have more to complain of in the unfaithfulness of their followers than in the persecution of inconsistent Christians. I need scarcely remind Mr. Holyoake of the touching appeals of the late Mrs. Martin, respecting the enthusiasm of followers while lecturing, and their sudden and complete neglect afterwards; nor of the statements, in his trial for atheism, that his followers begrudged his salary, comparing his claims to those of a mechanic; and that "nine out of ten of the best men and women" Mr. Holyoake had known were forced out of infidel advocacy through fear of starvation, and that many of his own friends forgot him in gaol, where, if they had any honourable feeling, he would have been well supported: nor would one nearly related to him have felt the bitter neglect and coldness of those who feared more money might be wanted. There are circumstances in that trial too painful for this platform. One we may mention—that Mr. Holyoake complains that Mr. Owen, for the advocacy of whose views he was imprisoned, never wrote a line to him, nor took any notice of him, the whole six months. This was worse than the bigotry of opponents—it was the neglect of friends. There are some remarks in that history which imply that men had become sceptical of the sincerity of sceptics, and some imprisonment seemed requisite to recover a character for endurance; and it cannot be denied, and has not been explained by Mr. Holyoake, that he declared to Justice Erskine he meant not to insult God, but only to say that the clergy were too expensive; on which the judge observed, that if Mr. Holyoake could establish that as his motive and meaning, he should direct the jury to acquit him. Mr. Holyoake, therefore, had nothing more to do than to say, "I have just explained that such was my meaning," and he would have been acquitted. But he allowed the opportunity to pass, and therefore his imprisonment was either from an extraordinary want of understanding, or from a desire to remove the impression formerly hinted at. I cannot alter the facts; Mr. Holyoake has recorded them. A careful examination of the sufferings of infidels for their creed would

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materially destroy the impression made by their so frequent reference to them: as an examination of Mr. Holyoake's fate, in the hands of George Combe, by whose conduct he says he was "completely shattered;" and his third ruin as he sat with covered face at Bally the Bust-man's street door, and moralised on the darkening of his youth, would annihilate those one-sided appeals to sympathy from the early effects of religion. For secularism blighted him twice. Nor can the way in which Christians endured their sufferings be, advantageously for secularism, compared with the secular leader's conduct in a six months' imprisonment, when he made arrangements for destroying his own life, and has recorded and recommended the same precautions to others. John Bunyan never thought of it in his twelve years' incarceration, nor will Christianity suffer in a comparison of Paul before Felix and Holyoake before Phillips. I give no opinion as to the legal question, only contrast the advocate of the gospel and the advocate of secularism. Paul abashed the secular motives of his judge, who, as "a wise method of self-defence," expected that money would be given to him to release the prisoner. And as Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." There was a moral power in Christianity which not only sustained Paul, but shook the judge in the presence of the persecuted freethinker. Mr. Holyoake writes in the *Reasoner*, that "being asked, 'Do you believe in God?' I replied, 'Of course not,' with the same indifference as if the inquirer had said, 'Mr. Holyoake, do you address an audience with your hat on?' when I should say, 'Of course not.'" But when Commissioner Phillips asked this question, the answer was not "Of course not," but, "I cannot reply with brevity sufficient for the court." Paul would not have asked to take an oath in a sense contrary to the words, as Mr. Holyoake offered to take an oath, if not regarded "as a confession of faith." If Paul had disliked the words, Felix would have trembled again before Paul would have repeated them. Paul, in reply to the question, "Do you believe in God, or in Christ?" would have been glad to give an answer, "Yes," or "No," or "I am doubtful," with "brevity" or at length, for he feared nothing, hid nothing, and dared all things but prevarication. It was this new spirit inspired into men by which Christianity raised the world; arming its meek followers against the rage of the populace, the power of the law, and the malice of the priest; preparing them, under Nero, "some to be torn in pieces by dogs, others to have their garments smeared over with some combustible material, to be set on fire to illuminate the public gardens at night." This illumination has since lighted the world, and guided us to our present liberties. Mr. Holyoake observes in one case, that if he

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had the power of public opinion and of the common law on his side, he could put down any opinions. All these forces, however, could not eradicate Christian convictions. The philosophic tenets and Roman statesmanship might approve of and employ wholesale judicial massacre, to exterminate those who dared to profess Christ. But that religion which lately, in Madagascar, made nineteen persons at one execution refuse to recant, even when partly let down a rock over which they were to be hurled,—exhibited its true heroism, in commencing the great battle of liberty for human thought, and bequeathed this noble spirit to the world, as part of the New Testament, in the blood of Christ and his followers. This battle has been continued in the rise of protestantism and puritanism, and amongst the Waldenses and the Covenanters, all of whom displayed religion as the foe of usurpation, and taught that the greatest contributors to liberty have ever been the martyrs of Christ's cross.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—I will refer first to the observations Mr. Grant made concerning my advocacy of, and preparation for, suicide while I was at Gloucester gaol. If he should read the whole passage, you would find that it contains these express words, "I am no friend whatever of suicide." But the circumstances were these. There is something worse than death to be feared in a gaol,—that is, in a modern gaol,—Insanity. All the men whom I have known, who have been imprisoned for opinion, have been for a time made the worse for it, and the bravest of them all was irreparably injured. In this case the Christian obtains a double triumph; he spares your life, and he takes your reason. His humanity is applauded, and his anger is appeased, and he turns you forth an imbecile upon the world, to carry your degradation into every corner of the land, while he follows you, pointing to the errors of a wandering mind, as the legitimate result of your principles. Suicide is a crime, if it be the death of cowardice shrinking from duty; but suicide is an appalling necessity in the face of that calamity which reduces you below the beasts, and converts your patient suffering into a disgrace of your cause. A gaol is a desolate place; there is no one there whom you can trust; there is no fair communication possible outside. Once within the walls of a prison, the reason of none but the callous is safe. It never was my temper to submit tamely to misfortune: and while my mind was sound, I in self-protection took my life into my own keeping, lest the day should come when it should be too late. And I would do it again. I will show you before the evening is over how far Christianity is answerable for those proceedings, and how far Mr. Grant has reason to congra-

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tulate himself that any treatment I received at the hands of Christian magistrates should have made death an alternative preferable to enduring it. He is altogether wrong about our opposition to sending missionaries to foreign parts. Our objection has been not to the money spent, but to the bad purpose for which the money is spent. We think it might have been spent in civilizing instead of doctrinizing the people. There are human and popular elements in Christianity which have undoubtedly been of service to mankind. Our complaint is, not that they are there, but that they are fettered by contradictory doctrines, which have almost rendered them nugatory. If Mr. Grant would read to you a passage from a pamphlet lately published by the Rev. Mr. Massingham, of Derby, containing extracts from the writings of the Rev. Angell James, respecting the treatment of Independent ministers, you would find that there never was any treatment of my own colleagues half so bad as that. Mr. Owen did not come to me at Gloucester; but there were reasons for his not doing so. I was then young, and comparatively unknown; nor do I see that there was any reason why he should have troubled himself about me, now I know more of how he was employed. I can readily understand, if he had known me as well as he does now, he would have been the first to be of service to me. With regard to the trial, Mr. Grant says my conviction was owing to my ignorance. Let Mr. Grant take his place in a dock, and try his fortune there. What are the words he quotes? The judge said to me, "If you can persuade the jury that that was your intention, I shall direct them to acquit you." But how could I know that I *could* persuade the jury till I had made my defence? If I had then sat down, I should have been convicted and sentenced without a chance of my being heard on my own behalf. If Mr. Grant is disposed to give up the controversy when he has heard a paragraph from the Bible on the subject he alluded to, I will read him Psalm xci. ver. 10: "There shall no evil befall thee; neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling: he shall give his angels charge concerning thee." Now, there was one promise which the young man in Yorkshire, whom I referred to, surely might have relied upon. But if Mr. Grant says, David is not a Christian, why then Christ emphatically said, "Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and *all* these things shall be added unto you." I must just refer briefly to the argument of last night, because it will illustrate what Mr. Grant has been saying this evening. He introduced the analogy of the judge and the physician with reference to my

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argument against the last judgment. Now, with the judicial deeds of Lord Campbell I agree; but were Lord Campbell All Powerful and All Good, he would never have first created men, whom he knew would come to be criminals, and then condemn them eternally for being so. And that is the point in question. Mr. Grant's medical argument was equally at fault. The physician tells us we shall die if we do not follow the recipe; but he does not tell us we shall be damned. We thank him for telling us the natural consequences of our conduct; but we should not thank him if *he made* the consequences, and made them eternally to exceed our offence. Besides, the physician of the body merely tells us that we shall suffer for violating the law of nature, whereas the Physician of Souls tells us that we shall suffer eternally for not violating the law of truth and evidence, and for not believing, whether we can or not. For it is to this that it comes. For my rejection of Christianity being as sincere as Mr. Grant's acceptance of it, by what rule of equity shall I perish if he be saved? Now, the attempt to reconcile the two Christs of Scripture was a still more painful failure. "Every true man," it was said, "includes *two* men," but not two *contradictory* men. In all greatness there is a majestic unity. The stern man of business is always a man of justice. If he is gentle by the fireside, he is equitable in the world. He does not give precepts of forgiveness to his children, and straightway practise revenge in the world. The nobility of character is made up of gentleness and firmness, not of *gentleness* and *vengeance*. There is no reconciling Christ's preaching forgiveness of enemies on earth, and sentencing the honest sceptic (who is no enemy) to everlasting fire in the world to come. A just austerity is compatible with a noble gentleness; but when austerity, not content with mastery, forgets magnanimity, and descends to torture its captives, the element of mercy is extinguished. To tell us that the Lord of Love is also the Lord of Hell, is to ask us to reconcile the angel and the fiend. We have been told that, because we claim the "right of discretionary silence," we have abandoned the policy of opposition in which we have taken a certain pride. That form of opposition which impressed the public with the idea that mere antagonism was the essential element of our advocacy we have certainly re-cast, with a view of pursuing it in a more proportionate and impressive form. Since our free recognition of every opponent who arose has been made an occasion for representing us as a mere disputing party, we take the liberty we concede to others, of choosing when we will debate, and whom we will meet; and "opposition is (no less) our opportunity" because we consult public usefulness and self-respect in determining what kind we will recognize. We

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neither feel surprised nor concerned at the language addressed to us in this controversy. If disparagement and misrepresentation would destroy the Free-thinking party, it would have been destroyed years ago. But we shall neither complain nor remonstrate on these platforms; we shall, as suitable opportunities offer, justify ourselves; but we understand our age well enough to know that it is by a different machinery, and in another way, that we shall win civil recognition and social justice, and we shall take our measures accordingly.

In such an audience as this, there will be many who will naturally consider my case not made out; but I think it will be admitted that I at least have endeavoured to define Secularism, and explain it, and enforce it. But what definition of Christianity has Mr. Grant committed himself to? What summary of its principles has been put before us? What demonstration has he entered upon? Christianity, which has been accustomed to lecture us for being negative and antagonistic, has in this debate simply betaken itself to fault-finding. Mr. Grant professes not to know what I am; but is that uncertainty all on one side? He came into this debate an Evangelical Christian; but I am sure no man can tell what he will be theologically, when he goes out. On the first night he contended that my notions of secular duty were the same as those taught by Christianity; and but for the circumstance that he denounced me for agreeing with him, you could not have told which was the Minister or which was the Lecturer. On the second night, when he said that Christianity "never taught men to seek temporal aid by prayer," he went farther than George Combe in his "Constitution of Man;" and in his speech on Providence, saying that God never interfered in the order of nature, his doctrine was the same as that of the author of the "Vestiges." On the third night, when he admitted that there were moral elements in human nature, independently of Bible influences, he agreed with Voltaire, Ensor, and Sir Charles Morgan; and when he contended that spiritual dependence consisted in the relation of ideas to action, I thought I heard a Swedenborgian talking. On the fourth night, his silence on the doctrine of eternal punishment would have done credit to Dr. Priestley. And on the last night, when he defined "saving faith to be a practical reliance on a safe system," and said that "we were to use the Bible as any other book," (which means, if it means anything, that we may take the good and reject the bad,) he spoke as a Secularist. So that, within the narrow compass of six nights, we have had more than six Grants in the field. So true is it that the Free-thinker of the last generation has been the father of the orthodox Ministers of this day. Now, when I revert from Mr. Grant to the

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gentlemen who sit around him, it is not to disparage him, as he said, with his friends, but to be sure that his sentiments are accepted by the influential body of Christians who put him forward, and who henceforth will be responsible for them.

There was one leading assertion which time and relevance will just allow me to notice here—I allude to Mr. Grant's declaration, that while God did not answer prayer for temporal aid, he would those for consolation. The lesser physical miracle of God granting direct assistance to the sufferer, Mr. Grant rejects; and calls upon us to believe in the greater moral miracle, that a God of mercy should hearken to the prayer of human agony, and not help; should send consolation, and not deliverance—contradicting our holiest notions of humanity. What is this but telling us that when, in anguish and madness, the poor sufferer calls unto God for help, his heavenly Father will look down from his throne with a cold, glassy eye, and tell the dying wretch or the frantic suppliant, that his expectation is "a perversion of prayer and providence;" that "God makes no miraculous interferences;" that he *consoles*, but he does *not save?* Let us hear no more of "cold and desolating atheism," if this is the language of Christianity to the chained slave, the imprisoned martyr, and the helpless poor.

Those who dispassionately review the aspects of Christianity, as presented in this debate, will find its popular pretensions much lower than the most sanguine of us could have expected. Christianity has hitherto offered itself—and you will see in this contrast the answer to the historical sketch Mr. Grant has given of its early rise and influence—Christianity has hitherto offered itself to the world as the only source of morality to the people; but as it has been admitted that the elements of morality are independent of Christianity, it is clear that secular sources of it may exist among us. Christianity has offered itself to governments, as a supplementary terror; the clergy, teaching eternal torments louring over the people, have been regarded as an order of spiritual police; but as this doctrine of hell has met with no hearty defence, with scarcely indeed a recognition, in this debate, we may conclude that it is dying out even in Evangelical quarters. On the whole, we arrive at this conclusion: that Christianity, supposed to initiate morals as a civil peculiarity—supposed to intimidate evil doers by special machinery, its great political use—supposed to be the Providence of life, providing personal protection and temporal blessings by its special instrument of prayer, which was its popular consolation—that Christianity in these respects is no longer what the people of this country have been led to believe; for its great moral initiative, its supernatural terrors, and the popular efficacy of its prayers, (ever its most seductive feature,) have been here

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before us all publicly explained away, or denied as gross free-thinking perversions and unpardonable misrepresentations.

With respect to the general proposition of the debate, whether Secularism shall be accepted and Christianity entirely removed, I have no doubt that we should be great gainers by the exchange, if it could be effected; for Secularism would immediately renew what of needful truth may now exist in Christianity. The true course of national progress is to cherish whatever good you find, and endeavour to augment it; and if I have rightly understood free-thinking opposition, it has always been thus proportionate in its intentions. If you look into the pages of its leading writers in our own country, from Lord Herbert of Cherbury down to Lord Byron, you will be astonished to find that what you have called their "infidelity" has been little more than a vehement protest against what they took to be the perversion of Christian principles, which they accepted. Though I am less Christian than either of the writers whom I have named, I am perhaps even more disposed to recognise what truth I can, and to avoid the introduction of more antagonism into these needful conflicts. Those with whom I have acted have always been pledged to proceed by reason, and not by force. Wanting, we trust, neither just zeal nor steady enthusiasm, we are content to wait for conviction to grow; for if you *force* even truth upon a man, it is an evil to him who does not understand it, and an offence to him who does not want it. I therefore content myself with maintaining, that in the respects in which we have in some measure compared Christianity and Secularism together, we should in those respects be benefited by the substitution of my views for those which Mr. Grant has represented. Christianity treats of two sets of duties—to God and to man: we hold that the Duties to Man take precedence in importance, and indeed include the highest possible duties to a benevolent God. Christianity holds that faith in Christ alone will save us: we hold that Faith in Good Works will better save us, as humanity is higher than dogmas. Christianity teaches that Prayer is a means of Providential help: we teach that Science is the sole available means of temporal help. Christianity professes to supply the highest motives and the surest consolations: we say no motives can be purer or stronger than the love of goodness for its own sake, which brings consolation sweeter than dignities and loftier than talents. Christianity assumes that the Moral sense cannot be educated without the Bible: we answer that the high culture attained in Greece, before the days of the Bible, is possible, in a purer and more universal sense, in these days of scientific civilization: we answer that the Bible, which has been understood in opposite senses by the ablest

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men—the Bible, which has divided the holiest churches, and which down to this hour dictates harshness of language and bitterness of spirit—cannot be a book of moral culture to the people. Christianity declares it has the promise of this life and of that which is to come: we have explained how Secularism secures the realization of this life, and establishes fair desert also in any life to come; for the "best use of both worlds" is the secular use of this. Christianity contends that if the Christian is wrong he will be no worse off than ourselves hereafter; while if he is right, we shall be in danger: but this only proves that our system is more generous than yours, because our system still provides no harm for the Christian hereafter, while your system does provide harm for us. Christianity either denies that there can be sincere dissent from its doctrines; or it teaches that for conscientious difference of opinion the last hour of life will be the beginning of never ending misery. Secularism, on the contrary, says that that solemn moment when death exerts his inexorable dominion, and the anguish of separating affection blanches the cheek; when even the dumb brute betrays inarticulate sympathy, and the grossest natures are refined, and rude lips spontaneously distil the silvery words of sympathy; when the unfeeling volunteer acts of mercy, and tyranny pauses in its pursuit of vengeance, and the tempest of passion is stilled, and the injured forgive, and hate is subdued to love, and insensibility to affection;—we say, *that* can never be the moment chosen by a God of love in which to commence the execution of a purpose which humanity cannot conceive without terror, nor contemplate without dismay. Such are the teachings of Secularism: how far these views are benefits, and how far these benefits are merely sensual, let the dispassionate hearer judge. Our general, social, and political ideas I may express in the words of one to whom history has not yet done justice: "We still desire an order of things in which all the mean and cruel passions shall be chained down, all the beneficent and generous passions awakened, by the laws; in which ambition shall consist in the desire of meriting glory and serving our country; in which distinctions shall spring but from equality itself; in which the citizen shall be subject to the magistrate, the magistrate to the people, and the people to justice; in which the arts shall flourish as the decorations of the liberty that ennobles them; and in which commerce shall be a source of public riches, and not of the monstrous opulence of a few great houses only. We desire to substitute in our country morality for egoism, probity for honour, principles for usages, duties for courtesies, the empire of reason for the tyranny of fashion, contempt of vice for contempt of misfortune, manly pride for insolence, greatness of

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soul for vanity, love of glory for the love of money, honesty for respectability, good people for good company, merit for intrigue, genius for wit, truth for display, the charms of happiness for the satiety of pleasure, the greatness of man for the littleness of the great.

MR. GRANT:—Mr Holyoake has given us a very good auctioneer's catalogue, if he can fulfil all his promises. He says that we shall be able by his system to attain to that which Grecian culture attained before Christ. I told you what Grecian culture had attained before Christ, in the words of the Infidel historian Hume, namely, that "an Athenian man of merit might be incestuous, a parricide, a traitor, a perjurer, an assassin, and something else too bad to name, and yet should have statues erected to his honour, and poems and orations uttered in his praise." That is the Grecian culture to which Mr. Holyoake will lead us. Mr. Holyoake referred to imprisoned martyrs, saying that they have no help but spiritual help. Well, if they have spiritual help they have what Mr. Holyoake had not, or he would not have made such a precaution, nor have referred to such a resource, nor have made so lamentable an account of the misery of being imprisoned, lest it should take away a man's senses. A thing never thought of by any Christian martyr for two thousand years. Mr. Holyoake spoke in his true method, that which I pointed out to you before, attempting to fasten, by a certain insinuating course, some disparaging reflection upon those who shall oppose him; and he thinks that if I go away from this platform stamped with his stamp of heresy, then my friends, of course, will forsake me. Gentlemen, I have no fear for it, but there are no thanks to Mr. Holyoake if he does not accomplish it. He did not see why Mr. Owen should come to him, or take any notice of him while he was in jail. Then if he did not see it he should not have complained of it, and written the complaint eight years afterwards. He did not try to persuade the jury, because he did not think he could; but why did he not try if he wished? He quotes the 91st Psalm as a grand verse out of the New Testament, and then he asks if I do not think that David was a Christian? No, I do not; David was a Jew. And he quotes that same Psalm which was quoted in our Lord's temptation, where it is said, "he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Satan quoted that to Christ, and Christ quoted Scripture again and said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," by the folly and absurdity of Secular providence. It becomes my duty once more to see that the object

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and conditions of this discussion shall be clearly understood. The general proposition is now well known,—"What benefits would be gained by mankind in general, and the working classes in particular, as to this life, by the removal of Christianity and the substitution of Secularism in its place." Mr. Holyoake adopted and signed this, having altered it by omitting the term Atheistic, that "our religions might" not "come into collision," for he has kept his own out of sight. Whatever has not tended to establish this general proposition has been beside the mark. But Mr. Holyoake disavowed this proposition on the second evening, and therefore, virtually abandoned the object of this discussion, as too extravagant even for him to maintain: and he adopted the course, not of removing Christianity, but of stealing from it, to adorn his own barren annals with the spoils of "the charlatan Christ." He advanced two pretexts for this evasion; first, that the proposition he adopted was explained away by a proposition he rejected, and that whilst Christianity is to be explained literally, in all its figures, he is not literally bound to a signature that was not figurative.

The second pretext for his evasion was, that the proposition originated with me; therefore, though he signed it, he does not pretend to maintain it; and this course would render all debate impossible, since the proposition must originate with one side, and Mr. Holyoake has taught the other side to repudiate what they sign, because it did not commence with them. The main proposition, signed by both disputants, and agreed upon by two committees, Mr. Holyoake did on the second night abandon, and decry the assertion he came here to maintain. He gave up his cause on the second out of six nights, and occupied most of the subsequent time in misrepresenting Christianity on doctrines we had not signed and agreed to discuss—as special providence, eternal punishments, hereditary depravity, and responsibility for belief, none of which occur in that correspondence which led to and should have guided in this discussion, and which is to be printed as the preface. It is no wonder, therefore, that Mr. Holyoake objected to my fair proposal, that any reply to an argument or assertion should be accompanied with the figure, indicating the page or speech in which the assertion occurs on which the argument is founded. None could object to this, who did not consider it would be more convenient to the reader than creditable to the accuracy and fairness of the disputant. We may next notice the subsidiary arguments by which the general object was to be maintained. Certain doctrines of Christianity were advanced by me, which Mr. Holyoake was to impugn, and which he left for others which I had not defined, whose introduction

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was an irrelevance, whilst Mr. Holyoake's description of them was a distortion; and I am not bound to maintain his burlesques of Christian doctrines, but those doctrines stated in my own way, for which Mr. Holyoake should have asked my definition, instead of attacking his own theological nightmares. He not only introduces points we had not signed—he now proposes to go beyond the list of benefits promised from his own system. These benefits he agreed to give me before the debate, in our correspondence. He gave three, saying, "These include the series of advantages I regard as conferred by Secularism." He never gave me any other. If he did not know till the end of our correspondence, the secure basis of his creed, he was not in a fit condition to agree upon a debate. If he then knew these general advantages, the El Dorado of advertising promises, it was an artifice to reserve them for the last night, whilst professing to put me in possession beforehand of the glorious prospects he held out once more to mankind. His proposed topic to-night is, therefore, a grand chaotic impertinence. Let him not quarrel with the word—it is no plainer than the fact.

As to the three propositions, the defence of which was to overthrow Christianity, Mr. Holyoake should not only have tried to support them, but to show wherein they, if true, disturbed the foundation of the Christian religion, and also what benefit they would be to the world. So far as his three propositions are true they are irrelevant; and so far as they are false, they are equally useless for this debate. The first is utterly disabled—it evades the doctrine held and ever taught till now, by Mr. Holyoake and assistants—that there is no other life; it omits the fact that all Christian duties are those of this life; and it teaches the immoral principle of preferring this life to another, whilst it hides the teachings of Secularists that there is no other. The second proposition, that "science is the providence of man, and spiritual dependence may lead to material destruction," omits the fact, that all science deals with nature, which is God's providence, and belies the convictions of the whole Christian world and the teachings of Christianity, in assuming that we neglect any aids afforded by God's providence, or rely on a spiritual dependence to travel without carriages, or live without food, or succeed without industry—especially when Mr. Holyoake has been forced to confess that "science is neutral," and, therefore, belongs no more to him than to us; whilst he cannot deny that science flourishes nowhere so much and so freely as where the New Testament is respected and is free.

The third proposition is a bare irrelevance, and is ignorantly stated, and maintained in several senses. That "morality is independent of scriptural religion" is either true or false, as it is

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understood. It is true in an irrelevant sense, and as a truth independent of this debate is recognized in Christianity—that man has a moral nature; but it is not true that man has sufficient moral truth apart from revelation, for all the moral truths of Secularists and all Infidels are stolen from Christianity; and all the world failed to build up morals before. There is a foundation for morals in human nature; but we require a house, as well as a foundation; and Mr. Holyoake proves we do not want a building, because we have ground, though he has none for his building. Mathematics have foundations in human nature; but that does not destroy the necessity for acredited books. Reason is founded on human nature; but Mr. Holyoake would not like to hear the truth, that we do not need his *Reasoner;* nor must he assert the untruth, that we do not need the Gospel, because men have a conscience, which he often proves out of Bishop Butler's Sermon on a Gospel text. Mr. Holyoake is great in our "concessions," which are always exhibitions of his unfairness. We explain a doctrine he misstates, and then he says we concede to it; we acknowledge a truth he takes from us, and then he asserts we abandon that cause from which his truths are plagiarized by "eclecticism." He has found that I "speak against providence," because I showed he did not understand it. So he is strong in my "admitting all he wants"—that in a sense which he does not mean, morality may be independent of Scripture, namely in the same sense as it is independent of Confucius and Mr. Holyoake. He should set up China as a model against England, and quote the late edicts there against free-thought, and the executions of Christian martyrs in that land of Secular progress. He should be a Chinaman, wear a long tail at the back of his head, and put his lady friends in small shoes, and claim acquaintance with the moon, the great patroness of Confucian progress. Certainly, if inconstancy be the sign of the moon's character, Mr. Holyoake may put in a claim to relationship, for he says truly in the *Reasoner*, that it shall not be stigmatized for sameness. "It is the old thing over again" shall never be true of our advocacy. It never can be. The greatest truth of it is, that it is nothing at all, or "all things by turns, and nothing long." It is a charming variety, only the world should go into mourning from Mr. Holyoake's late announcement that it is "out of print." The Gospel is not out of print, and promises to see a great many more developments of free-thought travel down the same hill to oblivion. "Let be by-gones be by-gones," as Mr. Holyoake says, when you quote the last *Reasoner*, (Gentlemen, these are the *Reasoners*, they are not out of print yet, you see)—though in his correspondence with me he referred me to twelve volumes

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as his standard, now "out of print"—as he referred me, and refers his readers, in most charming confidence, to the *Cabinet of Reason* as the "permanent advised and revised statement of Secularism, by which they will be better judged;" and when I quote and expose it, though Mr. Holyoake edits and praises it, he says, "The book is not out of print, but the author is out of the country." He must have been "all up the country" himself when he resorted to these evasions of the standards he set up; and his followers, many of whom, I doubt not, are honest men seeking the truth, will not be slow to mark these discrepancies, and see how the Bible keeps its ground, whilst one after another of its rivals, when sent "out of time," cries "out of print"—it will fall upon them with a mist and trembling, "as when a standard-bearer fainteth;" and they will seek a new standard, that has braved two thousand years the battle and the breeze, and is never out of print. What Infidel book has kept in print, as the standard of fifty men, for five years? But then they call that progress; and Mr. Holyoake says we are opposed to progress, which, being interpreted, is, going there to come back again, up-and-down "Turn-again-lane." Still, we who are not for progression do progress, since he also declares that the ministers of this age are the Infidels of the last; and nearly all leading Infidels become preachers in the end; as Mr. Holyoake says, Richard Carlile taught Atheism under the cover of Swedenborgianism; and as he says of Robert Owen, whom he praises here, and declares in the *Reasoner* that he is a Pharisee and a double-dealer, who took to religious terms to secure the American press, and defended to Mr. Holyoake what the latter terms "saying one thing and meaning another." And as the Secularists now think to get on by masking their antagonism to Christianity, disavowing Atheism, whilst, in 1852, Mr. Holyoake said, "Secularism is the larger and more comprehensive name of Atheists." If he had said their cloak, he would have said the truth, though it will not defend them against this searching weather.

If any of Mr. Holyoake's statements are not exposed, it is simply from want of time, and from his not being able to afford me an account beforehand of the course he intended to pursue. Some attacks are parried at the time, and his sword flung up, when I proceed to settle a previous account, leaving, till a subsequent speech, the more complete demolition of any assertions. This though a disadvantage to an audience, is corrected in a book, which, for once, I hope Mr. Holyoake will find time to revise, that he may not, as before, find out the necessity of writing articles on "the un-trustworthiness of the Townley reports," which he agreed to make trustworthy by revising and correcting, but

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omitted to do so, and afterwards took advantage of the omission. He has time to collect speeches out of the *Reasoner*, but not time to correct what in the Townley debate he calls his "impromptu remarks," though few of these impromptus were new to me, as I reserve all the *Reasoners*. And since Mr. Holyoake, in proof of his non-obtrusiveness, and his desire not to be dragged into debate, observed of a town missionary, that "his plea of nervousness reminded" Mr. Holyoake "of the theological epidemic under which all the clergy laboured. They seem all nervous, as he can get none of them to debate with him;" this difficulty is now removed; he will always know where one lives who is not so afflicted, and who will ever be ready to answer any calls of that nature; for as we have at last something likely to be in print, and trustworthy, if Mr. Holyoake keeps to his signature at least in that respect, and since in this Mr. Holyoake has selected the statements that he abides by, we shall have no great need of research, but can take the basis of this discussion for any future ones. Every Christian is hereby authorized to meet Mr. Holyoake at any of his lectures, and ask him whether he will review the discussion with the present speaker, who undertakes to lead for two nights, to prove, first, that Mr. Holyoake has not invalidated any of the doctrines of Christianity I agreed to maintain; and, secondly, that he has not substantiated the benefits of Secularism as he promised, whilst Mr. Holyoake may take as many nights as convenient to lead in supporting the opposite positions. This will test that pleasant, well-worn, stereotyped compliment which he has so often commenced with in this discussion—that "if such is the opposition his views are to meet, he has no objection to it." Mr. Holyoake's silence, in reply to a previous hint of this nature, might lead some to suspect that he has some objection to this sort of opposition.

It will not escape the notice of the readers of this discussion, that Mr. Holyoake's attempt to fix the charge of persecution on Christianity, in the person of Paul and other apostles, failed; for the recommendations given by those writers were to be carried out in their own age, when they had not the civil power on their side, but were themselves persecuted; just as their doctrine of submission to the powers that be, was given, when they would not submit in religious matters; and so both are explained by the occasion, which excludes persecution of opponents and submission to tyrants over conscience. It is remarkable that Mr. Holyoake should go through the article of Panthea, without noticing any of the arguments in the Review of his *Trial for Atheism* in "*The Bible and the People*," and in the letter of D. G. (David Grant) in the *Reasoner*, to which that article was a professed answer. But

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this is the usual course. Sometimes a good article on our side is inserted; then Mr. Holyoake waits some time, asks a correspondent to answer, and finally observes that it is plain he is not afraid, for that he has allowed these objections to lie so long before his readers, and now it is not worth while saying much more on the subject; whereas, in truth, it is plain his readers do not preserve the *Reasoner*, else it would not be "out of print." So by the time the paper containing the argument is worn out and forgotten, Mr. Holyoake comes in with an answer. Now, all I have replied to in *The Bible and the People* has been inserted wholesale, with my own comments, which he knows better than to "stoop to" in reply. If he had printed our arguments with the *Reasoner* answer, there would have been an end of this charge of persecution brought against apostles. The passages they quote on this subject are very remarkable. One is, that Paul says of some, "whose mouths must be stopped." Here our free-thinkers are of course literal, and think of a gag; whereas Paul gags them by this explanation,—"By well-doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Mr. Holyoake has already admitted—and if he had not, I have proved—that he stands in the same relation to Secular lecturers as Paul to Christian teachers. Paul was the accredited expounder of Christianity, therefore was bound to warn against false apostles, such as pervert the system he teaches. Mr. Holyoake proposes an ecclesiastical Board of Examiners, to try the experience and creed of his young ministers, and warns his people not to have itching ears for the unlicensed. See his article on Henriette's Defection. But there is a degree in which Mr. Holyoake is not so bad as Paul: he claims a shade of difference. He will not say of false apostles of Secularism, "Let them be accursed." It may be because he is less frank than Paul; for he does not try to bless them, but pursues them all with a view to their overthrow. Now, that saying, "Let him be accursed," is only another statement of "Anathema Maranatha"—the Jewish form of excommunication; and means, let him be turned out of the society; and every club makes the same regulation. Mr. Holyoake does the same thing. He excommunicates, but then he would still receive these men into his house, only they would not go in; and that direction not to receive false teachers into our house, nor wish them God-speed, does not refer to private personal kindness, but to acknowledging such impostors in their line of pretension: "Lest thou be partaker of their sins," and seem to do what Mr. Holyoake elsewhere condemns—patronize truth and error alike. In all points, then this attack on apostles fails; whilst within the last month Mr. Holyoake inserts a note from a correspondent, who declares that Secularists must not be satisfied with destroying Gospel motives,

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for this, he says, does not aid morality, which is very much needed in their case, since he says, in effect, that he has seen many members in the gutter. Mr. Holyoake as editor observes,—"We must look to this, and try to say words that will reform them; but if this fails," he says, "we must imitate the churches, and turn them out." This is out of "detestation" to the members' "organization," and out of charity to the Secular organization of members—a "charity" which in our churches he calls "persecution," though, as usual, he takes the leaf out of our book, and having copied it, cuts it up with a knife. The same triumphant exposure can be given of every point, relevant or irrelevant, on which Mr. Holyoake has dwelt with so much confident declamation. Mr. Holyoake escapes the condemnation of his violent and unjust invectives towards his opponents, by saying they are in the "early volumes" of the *Reasoner*, and this in reply to his persevering attempts to injure the good name and professional standing of the Rev. Mr. Woodman, in the twelfth volume of the *Reasoner*. He escapes the charge of extenuating all crimes, by saying that he quoted from the *Zoist*; but what did he quote it for? And does he forget that his own language is the very same, and that Arthur Trevelyan, whose writings he praised in the same sentence in which he denied extenuating crimes, writes, "*The Insanity of Mankind*" in general, and of himself in particular, for no other purpose than to excuse all sins by the make of a man's brains? And did not Mr. Holyoake adopt this immoral pamphlet as a *Reasoner* tract? Mr. Holyoake may refer this question to his jury: I can put them in possession of hundreds of assertions which obliterate all distinctions of morality, and justify all crimes, from Mr. Holyoake's pen and his editorial selections and insertions.

However any may dislike these assertions, every one must admit that I have given plenty of proofs—that I can prove what I say to the minutest particular. Mr. Holyoake never quotes a passage I refer to, to prove me wrong; he has not done so all through the discussion. The statement that he had praised *The Bible and the People* more than any one before this discussion, where he abuses it more than any one, he did not meet by reading his notice: that would have doubly confounded him. In his *Cabinet of Reason*, "Why do the clergy avoid discussion?" a title to make one merry, he says,—"I am bound to say the Rev. Brewin Grant, of Birmingham, is an instance (of exceptional liberality). I have heard him read one of our books from the pulpit. *The Bible and the People*, edited by him, gives the freest insertion to opposing views, and has in some instances uttered generous words of the writers." (Vol. ii. pp. 26, 27). In his *Reasoner*, vol. xii. No. 24, Mr. Holyoake says of my review

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of his *Trial for Atheism*,—"The same monthly (*The Bible and the People*) contains careful reviews of this work, by a writer who is more than impartial—he is generous. Another number contains entire 'The last days of Mrs. Emma Martin,' with critical remarks by the editor, we suppose, as in the former case. The remarks commence by the admission that 'death and sorrow are sacred,' which the critic does not violate in spirit. Some reply seems due from us, which we hope to be able to write." This has not happened yet, though the article he thus praises is printed as a twopenny "Finger Post," by Ward and Co. "We have placed *The Bible and the People*," he says, "among our weekly list of literature for the people. It appears as a monthly, edited, we believe, by the Rev. Brewin Grant, B.A., of Birmingham. Judging from the contents of the first sixteen numbers, it is the best of the controversial publications devoted to the maintenance of evangelical principles. Our readers will find it well worthy of their perusal. Its tone is superior to anything we have encountered in the same Christian school. The numbers, as far as we have examined them, are critical, as well as instructive." The editor of that periodical does not wish for any higher praise; whilst he is informed that the "immoral pills" referred to by Mr. Holyoake were advertized only once, and omitted as soon as discovered by the proper party; but the immoral principles in those books Mr. Holyoake would not read to this audience are still the disgrace of literature and the bane of society. The attempt to escape from these works was very pitiful. He had not read both, but there was no immorality in the one he had not read; he had only advertized them, when he had before him his own words of the highest praise of the most immoral doctrines. The reference to the Rev. Mr. Malthus could not save him either; for he either knows that the writers he praises recommend what Malthus calls "improper and immoral arts," or he is ignorant of what he praised. He did not notice the fact that Antimarcus pretends to be a Christian, to lull the reader's suspicion, as Birch in several parts of his "Philosophy of Shakespeare," affects horror at profanity. He asked me to read certain passages of the Old Testament, and omitted to notice my argument on that subject. One of the Secular writers quotes a passage of the Bible, which describes a sin that is condemned, and this Secular moralist exhibits it as the indecency of the Bible; while the four books I referred Mr. Holyoake to, scientifically recommend the very same sin for social life—only they are all horrified at Bible impurity. They quote David's sin in the *Cabinet of Reason*, as a specimen of Bible morality, but never quote Nathan's parable to David. They live on misrepresenta-

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tion; and when we refer to their own recommendations, they quote Mill against "Sentimentality;"—that very Mill whom Mr. Holyoake applauds in his chapters on the size of families, where he proposes that a man shall be punished for having more than his legal number, which is called intemperance; whilst Mr. Holyoake recommends works which teach men how to keep down the number of children, as the means of keeping up the price of wages. Thus does he end in tyranny over the holiest relationships, if men will not descend to immorality in checking populations. A large family is the only large crime these philosophers acknowledge; whilst the advantage of not being found out in an improper course, is one of the arguments of these books for the plan they recommend, which would demoralize the conscience of mankind. Mr. Holyoake has a twofold doctrine, one for friends, another for opponents; and a twofold character, one of etiquette for a general platform, one of abuse for the columns of the *Reasoner*. They who wish to know this fully, must carefully read this discussion, and the penny tracts by Sanders J. Chew, published by Houlston and Stoneman, No. 4 of which exhibits many passages of courtesy to opponents I had marked in the *Reasoner*. These tracts are entitled, "*Mr. Holyoake Refuted in his Own Words.*" *The Bible and the People* will pursue this investigation till Secularism is well known in its real objects, as indicated in Mr. Holyoake's saying that "property and Christianity are worn out;" together with the ways and means they propose, to sweep away the present rulers, to make way for the legitimate leaders of the people—as intimated in the *Cabinet of Reason;* whilst Mr. Holyoake darkly hints in the *Reasoner*, that some of his plans may, when politic, be stated in a parliamentary speech. Truly there is no danger; but it may be well to warn some working men of the many precipices to which their legitimate leaders have led them, to be abandoned and cast down, whilst the leaders escape into another line of business. Mr. Holyoake has a method of humanitarian logic, by which he proves there is no future punishment. The same would prove there is no present suffering. He represents the Creator as listening to the sorrows of the lost: let the same figure be applied to a judge; let one ear be over the prison, and the other be sealed up against the rejoicing of law, order and society. Let our Queen have one ear open to all convicts and prisoners, the other closed against the prosperity of her dominions. And is this a true picture? and does it remove facts? Let his wise goddess Nature have one ear open to the cries of drowning sailors, sick people, all the troubles of life—the other closed against the infinite forms of happiness,—and then prove that

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Nature is malignant, or else that there is no suffering. When this logic fails for the facts of this life, we cannot well trust it for the facts of the next. He will not thus hermetically seal one ear of Nature, to make her gloat over sufferings; but, for the nonce, it is the God of the Bible who is thus insulted, whilst Mr. Holyoake pours into the ears of his auditors the "leprous distilment" of misrepresentation, to fill them with horror against the Giver of all good. Mr. Holyoake failed to prove that the fear of hell had an "immoral" tendency—that it led men to commit crimes in order to be punished. He failed to prove that God's judgment is man's rule of life, since "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." He failed to prove that God should not punish because we are to forgive; since the same would tell against all law. It is immoral to revenge—it is just that the magistrate should punish evil-doers. We are to forgive because we are forgiven: God is not forgiven, and the rule does not hold towards him. We are not to revenge because of our passions, and because of want of judgment, which would lead to injustice: God is to judge, because he is wise and just, and knows all motives and circumstances. He is not worse than men, by punishing in nature and in eternity, but may rightly do so, because he is wiser and better than men. To say we are to imitate God in this, is to prove our folly, and to deny Christianity, which gives the mercy of God as our rule, and reserves judgment to him alone.

There is only one other point of importance to be noticed in this hasty review. Mr. Holyoake has been driven to admit, that only belief saves on his plan, and that unbelief will leave men under wrath,—under the evils he proposes to remove. But then, his is "not eternal" damnation, and therefore is "more humane." But it is eternal in the Scripture sense, which means, what will happen to anything as long as that thing lasts; and if we refuse him that speaketh a Secular gospel, we adjudge ourselves unworthy of this life, which is our only one, so must be lost altogether. He cannot pursue further than the grave, and therein is the "humanity" of his punishment, that we can suffer no longer. No thanks to his new gospel for that! But then the hardship is, that we have only "one" gospel; we must take that, or be lost. Then has he two gospels—two means of temporal salvation? You say, "'I must go by this train, or be punished by delay.' Why this train? Why should I be bound to believe Bradshaw, or fail to reach my journey's end? True, there is only one sun to see by; but why should I be shut up to this? Truth is one, but why should it not be two, that we may have a 'choice?' There is only one way of eating, and we can live only in that way; but why should my 'judgment be bound?' and where is 'the charity'

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of my opponent in stating this fact, that if I do not eat I must starve? Why should I be 'frightened into virtue' by these laws of nature and of the gospel? I prefer the attractiveness of virtue, whose face I hid on the fifth night. Men shall be won, not terrified; and so far from future torments being employed as a motive, I 'recommend the picture of a drunkard's liver,' as a form of 'attraction;' and, despising the 'threats' of the Gospel, take the high ground that virtue is to be followed from fear of injuring one's digestion." They who can digest this grand logic, must have an organization not "to be detested—like a rattlesnake,"—though the worst snake is the one that lays aside the rattle, and hides himself in the grass.

MR. HOLYOAKE: You have had quoted a short passage of mine, in which I said that some of Mr. Grant's remarks upon some of our publications were generous; and so they were. I will always distinguish in what Mr. Grant does that which is generous from that which I think not so. But he does not lay so much stress as I should upon the word "some," to distinguish the fact that he is not always generous. I, however, am glad to find that though he seems to impugn the authority of my word upon every other point, he is willing to believe me when I speak in his praise. He has mistaken or overlooked the purposes for which I made the remarks about Mr. Owen, in the "Last trial by Jury for Atheism," where I am recounting what was said to me by the clergyman, my chaplain, and what was said to me by the magistrates, who imputed to me vanity as being the sole motive for my enduring imprisonment. My object then was to remind them and the public that I was placed then under circumstances in which there were no appeals whatever to my vanity; and I told that anecdote not in disparagement of Mr. Owen, or in complaint, but as an assertion that I was actuated by different motives than a love of notoriety, or any private incense to my own vanity. Mr. Grant ought to read the whole of the passages from which he quotes, instead of calling upon me to read them again. I should occupy all my time if I did so; but if he himself were to read the entire passages, you would be astonished to find how perverse is the misrepresentation he has given to you of them. He has held up to you—and I am very glad to see it—a complete set of the *Reasoner*. I hope there are many such extant. I know there are hundreds of people in this country who have complete sets; but I said complete sets could not now be had. I did not say the *Reasoner* was out of print as any reason why Mr. Grant should not quote from it, but only as a reason why I was obliged to refer to his personalities, because everybody, not being able to get the

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Reasoner, would not be able to read our side of the case as well as his. In the Townley discussion, as in all the discussions which have been published, the publication has been proceeded with without my consent; and I think the speeches ought not to have been put forth in the way in which they were. This is the first time in my life in which I have taken any precaution whatever that what I do say shall be adequately reported; and I am glad to find that this report will be one which I can gladly certify as an authentic report of what has taken place, and a report by which I shall be willing to be judged.

Touching the brief observations made to you concerning the Apostle Paul and the justification of persecution, I did not understand the passages in the light Mr. Grant puts them; because, if Paul assumes of the persons who differed from him in his own church that their avowals are merely the ignorance of foolish men, I say he denies thereby their sincerity—a practice which will produce evil in every society where that takes place. Again, if it was true that to be accursed was merely meant to be a separation from a society, how came the translators to hit upon that dreadful form of speech, instead of the simple word separation, or excommunication? St. Paul tells his followers to be separate from the others. For what purpose, think you? That they might not be "partakers of their sins." Why, here is the everlasting assumption, that whoever differs from the Christian must be wicked—must be a sinner. In all our churches or assemblies you can find nothing of the kind. We may, indeed, dissent from those who dissent from us; but we nowhere disparage them; we never pretend that they are criminal for their dissent; we never call down the judgment of mankind upon them. We always allow that they have the same right to hold their opinions, as we have to hold ours. I need not go over again the many points, or notice the instances which Mr. Grant has introduced. It would afford me pleasure and satisfaction to do so, but, as I have said, I shall take the opportunity of doing that in the *Reasoner*, more at my leisure. I should do it now, but it would divert the entire attention of this meeting from the consideration of the great principles which we were bound to lay before it. All I will add, therefore, shall be upon two points.

Touching the extracts from the books which Mr. Grant is pleased to say are immoral, the titles of them will appear in the report, and all I ask is that people shall read them, and then judge whether or not we are the sort of persons Mr. Grant describes. Touching what he said in defence of the passages in the Bible, to which he has again called attention, and which he says are merely these as police reports, he overlooks the fact that the *Times* news-

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paper is not edited by God; and secondly, that it never does contain such police reports as you read in the Bible. Then, what can be more satisfactory than this?—I won't call it an admission—I won't call it a concession, if that is offensive to Mr. Grant—but if, when the humble suppliant calls upon God for assistance—if when he finds himself placed in circumstances of desolation and danger, he calls to God, believing that God will hear and answer his prayer—if you call this the folly and the absurdity of Secular providence, there is no argument against the Scriptures that can disparage them so much as an argument like this; and that is the reason why I care so little to reply to observations which seem to be sufficiently forcible for all the purposes of truth without any comments of my own. As the object of this discussion was to bring into view the moral bearings of Christianity, a brief notice of its moral bearings as exhibited in this discussion will not be out of place in these last words which I have to say.

Touching the quotations from our literature made by Mr. Grant during this discussion, it is perhaps worth while remarking, that he has had to search through, from two to three thousand separate pieces of writing, extending over a period of seven years, and written by many different persons, in order to produce the case he has presented; and he leaves behind, and preserves silence upon, the overwhelming mass of instances of an opposite character. A correct knowledge of what our profession and practice have been, would much change the aspects of the accusations against us. The law of language which we endeavour to follow is, that all personalities and epithets shall be first *true*, and secondly *useful*; but as we are not infallible, our knowledge may sometimes be defective and our judgment at fault; and when any mistake of this nature has been pointed out, we have not failed to acknowledge it and correct it. Before you form an opinion upon the cases which have been mentioned, you ought first to ascertain whether what we have said be true, and if not, whether we *wilfully* made the mistake. Mr. Grant has read a declaration of mine, that "we had swept controversy free of imputation;" but he did not tell you that our meaning ever is, as is elsewhere explained, "free from the imputation of *evil motives to others*." If you knew, as it has been my lot to know, both in religion and politics, how the want of a rule like this poisons all discussion, you would say it is a wholesome rule. But the best of us are not perfect; and I may sometimes violate the rule, but never intentionally. This rule, however, does not disqualify me from characterising injustice of accusation, or of explicitly condemning erroneous principle. Language may be a no less vigorous *defence*, because it is not made a personal *offence*; but when you declare

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that every error is *wilful*, and every incomplete statement an *intentional falsehood*, you pass from criticism to bitterness; you turn words into daggers; you cease to instruct, and begin to destroy. Now, throughout this discussion, the worst construction has been put upon everything I have written or said. According to my opponent, I have not a motive that is pure, nor a sentiment that is just. My defences have been described as "lying," my silence as "cowardice," my speech as "insolence," my explanations as "evasions." The opinions of my friends have been termed "insults;" my wish to be fair has been called "canting;" my anxiety not to wound the serious convictions of the Christian part of this audience has been described as "hypocrisy;" solemnity in me was called "irrelevance;" the remembrance of the agony through which I passed in my youth, when an unquestioning believer in the entire words of Christ, was described as the reminiscence of a "heated imagination." This is not half, but it is enough to specify. You may call this the advocacy of Christianity —I call it the art of making Christianity disagreeable. And while you stand with one hand on the Bible and the other thus at our throats, and cry, "*Believe, or we denounce you as infamous in life and deserving perdition in death*," you deepen the conviction on my mind that the "Glad tidings of the Gospel" merely mean Good-will to those who believe as you believe, and *ill-will to all who do not.*

It was my duty the other night to show that Christianity justified persecution. Now, what is the difference between the spirit in which we have been addressed in this discussion, and that of the persecutor? The Rev. Dr. Vaughan says in his "Congregationalism," in the chapter on "Modern Persecution," that the man who attaches a private penalty to the exercise of public and legal rights virtually destroys them; and we know that he who destroys the rights of another is a persecutor. Now Mr. Grant has proclaimed that he does not question my right to my opinions. Then, why does he attach to me the opprobrious epithets which he applied to me, and which, if believed, would constitute a serious private penalty in the exercise of that right? He cannot think my opinions more injurious, and in some respects more immoral, than I think his; but I distinguish between his errors and his intentions. I have nowhere called in question his sincerity, or the purity of his motives; but if you believe what he has said of us, we are dishonest, we are hypocrites, we are false, we wear a mask, and, he added, "there is nothing viler than the purpose for which we wear it." If this be true, for what purpose did Mr. Grant ask me to meet him in private? If this be true, Mr. Gilfillan was merely consistent in advising those to take care of their

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property in whose company I was. If this be true, and you do not persecute by law, it is only your omission, or your inconsistency: the spirit is here, the language is here, and it does seem to me that you lack only the power or the courage to do the rest. If you have a gaol for the man who merely steals your purse, how much more do you need one for the man who, you say, dishonestly and hypocritically goes about with "a mask on for the vilest of purposes." If this language be believed it would be impossible that we could live in society; if this language be true, *social persecution must be the sequence.* Why, during my six months imprisonment in Gloucester gaol, for answering a question of a local preacher in Cheltenham, neither by the crown lawyer, nor by Mr. Justice Erskine, nor by my chaplain, the Rev. Robert Cooper, was language used to me half so bad as that which has been applied to me during this discussion; and I now see that less injustice is done to me by a legal persecution by the Church of England, than in a discussion with an Independent Dissenting Minister. Mr. Grant will see in this only another "grand compliment to his argument;" but the public will see in it something very different. In discussions with other ministers, when I have pointed out the spirit of acerbity which Christianity seemed to me to justify, they have denied my conclusions, and I have said, "Wait till we meet some accredited Evangelical Minister, and then you shall see;" and when Mr. Grant's attention was drawn last night to his own conduct, you heard the reply, which ought not, and which shall not be soon forgotten, "*I shall justify the conduct of Christ, whose example justifies my own course.*" And Mr. Grant is right. The Scriptures fully bear him out. Neither Christ nor his apostles ever admitted that the sceptic could be honest, or the unbeliever sincere; and when you begin by assuming broad dissent to be manifest guilt, it can matter little what you say to such a man, or how you treat him: it becomes mere hypocrisy or complicity to reciprocate courtesies with one whom you believe to be a wilful criminal. Hence every man with an honest doubt feels that the Bible is an indictment against him; and the minister (who commonly believes no trial needful) is the executioner. That whatever treatment we have experienced in this discussion is scriptural, we have the further testimony of the *British Banner*, which last week declared, on the part of the intelligent and numerous body of Evangelical Christians who put Mr. Grant forward, that "he completely meets their views as to the manner in which this thing ought to be gone about." True it is there are parts of Scripture which do counsel more fairness and a different temper; but of what avail are they in a book which is said to be inspired throughout? One part is as binding

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as another; and this it is that makes the Bible a double book. The Emperor of Russia may quote it in his Wilna catechism, where the clergy teach the serfs to make no effort for temporal freedom, but "to suffer and be silent," for "such was the example of Christ and his apostles;" and the emperor has the same right to quote it as the noble Poles have to quote it in defence of their valorous struggles against his tyranny. In fine, the idolatry of the Bible is the ruin of progress; it may be made to play fast and loose with humanity; and honest men can make no protestation against it. In its pages the Catholic is as strong as the Protestant; the tyrant as strong as the patriot. The poor negro cries for deliverance in its language; and his master lashes him in its name. Hence, whether for personal, political, or intellectual freedom, we turn to Secularism, not less for juster, larger, and independent convictions, than for self-defence. We will not even ask the equality the Christian has so long refused. We will live by no sufferance. This world is as much ours as yours. The same Nature teaches us, the same sun shines upon us, the same universal laws speak to us. God has not made you his confidantes. The secret of the future does not dwell with you. Untried existence has the same sublime interest for all men whose honest thought has made them free—whose honest service has made them good. Therefore, doubt it not, *we shall be saved by our own truth.* And on our way we will work with you where we can, if you will let us; if not, we will work by ourselves. But we hope ever to work with good-will, without which no system is worth anything; ever with moderation, without which alliances and progress are impossible; and ever with that energy which gives dignity to conviction.

MR. GRANT:—I hope all my friends will be good enough not to give the least expression of feeling till I have done, and I am sure I may rely upon the honour of the free-thinkers to do the same. Mr. Holyoake's rule of courtesy I do not object to, but simply question how far he follows it. I have not mentioned more cases of his violation of the rule, because I had not time. If what I have said is not true, Mr. Holyoake should have disproved it. It was not Mr. Holyoake who I said wore a mask for the vilest purposes, but Antimaranus, the writer of one of those objectionable books. If Mr. Holyoake does "not question my motives," he cannot blame my conduct. The proposal on the previous night, to read the passages of the books I offered to Mr. Holyoake, if I would read certain passages in the Old Testament, was very satisfactory to me; the mere reference to the Old Testament, which contains a national history and a national religion, was at once a concession that the New Testament, which

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Mr. Holyoake came here to impugn, offers no competition in indelicacy with the books in question; secondly, it shows that Mr. Holyoake can defend his principles only by saying that others are as bad; not by proving it. Thus he abused Mr. Weadman, but then, "If you please, sir, he hit me first." I quote the *Reasoner*. He says he "could" quote worse things from *The Bible and the People*, but thinks he had better not. It remains a mystery to this hour what he brought the twenty-four numbers for. He had charged the gun to the mouth, but dare not put a match to the touch-hole, lest, in going off, it should shake down his own ramparts. He is a brave man, and needs it all for the forlorn hope of scaling the heights of Zion. To prove the benefits of Secularism he dreams under the weight of a theological nightmare, and waking up, destroys Christianity by crude references to Jewish history, which is not the Jewish religion, but an honest account of the crimes of bad men, and the failings of good ones; to which he appends the *quod erat demonstrandum,—ergo*, three benefits would accrue "to the working-classes in particular, by removing Christianity, and substituting Secularism in its place;" only he does "not purpose to remove" it; he will steal its jewels, and set up with them in a shop of his own. This he calls "Eclecticism;" it is sometimes called "conveyance," and it is the trade of those who are "born under Mercury," and live by "picking up unconsidered trifles" before they are dropped by their owners. The following assertions in "*The Task of To-day*," dedicated to, and edited and praised as a standard by, Mr. Holyoake, will serve to complete the important inquiry commenced in my first speech. Of the early Christian times, the author says:—"The old religions were worn out, but the people were not prepared to do without one." The "fulness of time," then, was not come for Atheism; and Christianity was absolutely required; hence he proceeds:—"At Athens, in St. Paul's time, they erected an altar to an unknown God [this, of course, is a mistake, the altar was erected six hundred years before] and Christianity appeared most opportunely, as a reconciliation of doubt, difficulty, and dread. In such a state of public opinion, and with a vast preponderance of the people sunk in the darkness of ignorance and superstition, delicate, logical arguments, even if the Christian could wield such weapons, were neither suitable nor requisite." That is, the *Reasoner* would not have been suitable to them in that age; for the same writer declares again, "The Jews and heathens could not have been moved without supernatural authority, and reformers could not have laboured earnestly, if unsupported by a faith in Divine assistance."

The Christian religion is here acknowledged to contain two

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requisite elements,—a supernatural claim, that alone could move the hearers, and a hope of Divine assistance that alone could support the teachers; may not the same be required now for the greater part of mankind, and for teachers as well? But this author also affirms in the preceding page,—"The world has not yet acknowledged, loyally and unequivocally, the impossibility of any falsehood being beneficial." Yet he affirms, that Christianity was "beneficial," and the only possible means of moving the age, so dark and so degenerate, in which it appeared; therefore, it is "impossible" for Christianity to be a "falsehood." Still, between the two assertions, he also states—"We have enquired and we believe religion to be false and mischievous." So it was necessary for usefulness, yet falsehood cannot be useful, and this useful religion was false and mischievous; at least, has become so now. Falsehood, however, was useful then, for he says,—"Juvenal and Lucian commenced the task (of destroying popular superstition) which the early Christian writers achieved. When the Christians opposed their plausible religion to these decayed absurdities, when they explained their elevated opinions of the Divine nature, and their hopes of a glorious immortality the writers could not be long uncertain;" in an age when men believed in necromancy, &c., "a mere appeal to the pretended notoriety of the miracles, and their benevolent object, and an explanation of the pure morality of their doctrines, were sufficient to form the apologies of the early defenders of Christianity." Now these miracles which were thus requisite to command and enforce this pure morality, are defended to our reason by this necessity. We must not forget that miracles, or rather the pretences to them, are acknowledged to be essential to introduce a purer morality than the world ever dreamed of before. "It was necessary," he says, "in order that the Christian religion should be introduced to the world in a presentable shape, suited to the tastes and expectations of the age, that Christ should work miracles." This is a sufficient justification of the miracles, as extraordinary means, required to answer an extraordinary purpose. Of course, the Secularist denies the miracles; then he admits the necessity and usefulness of lies, which is an equal miracle, on his own principles; for it is, he affirms, "an impossibility for a falsehood to be useful," yet in this case it was "very opportune" to pretend to miracles, as the only possibility of being useful to mankind. Now the utility of lies is as much out of the ordinary course of nature, as the raising of the dead, yet he admits this miracle, that only the pretension to miracles and the falsehood of supernatural religion was suited to both Jews and Heathen, who, he affirms, "could not be moved" from their superstition and immorality,

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"without supernatural authority;" that is, without the false pretence of it, for such authority he denies to be real.

Here, then, they have miraculous lies, that, contrary to their ordinary nature, did the world good! And again, "Reformers could not have laboured earnestly if unsupported by a faith in Divine assistance," that is, on his own principles, if unsupported by the influence of falsehood, as again declared in these words, "When Jesus appeared, the world was ripe for change. Beginning to be sick of mythology and Judaism, but still clinging to many deep-rooted prejudices, and incapable of discovering the whole truth, it wanted supernatural authority for every great moral and social innovation." In other words, nothing short of Christianity, a religion claiming Divine authority, appealing to the natural awe of mankind, was capable of improving the world; or, in Secular dialect, nothing but lies were of any service. Then, if the present improved state of the world could only be attained by this religion, the present elements of progress are due to Christianity: since this "lie hath abounded" to the world's hope and advancement; and its continuance and cultivation may be as useful as the helpless and pitiful pretender, which declares that it could not have done any good, in the deranged condition of the world when Christ came; but now that he has set the egg on end, if he will but stand aside, these boastful reformers will manage the world for the future. And now Christianity is dismissed with these grateful words, "whatever share the Christian religion may have taken in the work of civilization, was finished long ago—its errand is done." Well, yours is but just begun; you have done nothing. Nor can Christianity have "finished its work long ago," when you admit that the Reformation, the reassertion of Christian liberty, freed the world from spiritual serfdom. "Protestantism," he observes, "was certainly an advancement on Papal Christianity, as far as liberty, humanity and honesty are concerned." Again, he writes, "The Reformation claimed for mankind the right of private judgment, and opened the road for every man's escape from the shackles of spiritual despotism." Now, this was the benefit first introduced by Christianity, and renewed in the Reformation, whose work is surely not yet performed, since there are still many countries in which men are not free; they are free nowhere except where the Bible is free, and where it has achieved freedom for the Infidel who rejects it. And here the "Secular standard" declares the value of Christianity to every man as the source of every man's freedom.

This errand of freeing men from slavery is not done; and the same reason which existed all over the world, requiring Christianity on its origin, now exists in all those parts of the world,

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where Christianity has not been published or received; and those parts where it has been subverted by priests, for a means of despotism; so that it has work enough yet, and is required as much as ever in Pagan and Popish lands, whilst Christian lands know it too well to abandon it at the request of men who, like priests, only misrepresent it. Christianity has begun and advanced a good work, which is not yet finished; so it is still required, to move the heathens and to move the Romans, who are heathenized Christians, and "who," as of old, "cannot possibly be moved without a supernatural religion:" therefore that which justified its introduction justifies its continuance. The author of the "*Task of To-Day*," who has thus dismissed Christianity, addressing his reader, very solemnly declares—"You are no prophet, none of us are prophets; but let us be well assured that no bad consequences will arise from truth, and no good from submission to falsehood." This is when he is giving a reason for abandoning Christianity; but at the period of its introduction, good came out of its falsehood; now, however, the great "task" he sets men is to repudiate the only system which has done men any good. This consistent Rationalist has written an epitaph for Christianity before it is dead, and eulogizes Secularism before it is born. "Christianity," (he writes) "once a green and flourishing tree, is now sapless, pithless, and rotten; nothing but the bark is left; it totters to and fro. Let thinking men quit its shade, lest it crush them in its fall." Did he not rightly say he was no prophet? Let no man be in haste to get out of the road, the tree is in no hurry to fall; if "only the bark is left," it must be very tough, to keep upright, and to rock to and fro; there never was such a spectacle seen before—it is another of the miraculous lies of fire-eating scepticism. Besides Mr. Bell may be informed, that if "only the bark is left," the fall of the tree would break no man's bones; so that the danger is as imaginary *from* the fall, as the danger of likelihood *of* a fall. When the sky falls we shall catch larks; but heaven and earth will pass away, before the tree of life falls; which the free-thinker confesses did once heal the nations, when his gourd had not sprung up, and which will remain to give immortal fruits and cooling shade to the hungry and weary traveller through this pilgrimage.

We cannot but marvel at the eagerness of our cabinet maker to fell this tree; it is falling; and people are to run out of the way; and yet he follows up this assurance with the imperative mood:—"Let all help to make it fall in a safe direction." This we imagine will require "a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether;" but Infidels never pull together, they pull away in different directions, and so counterbalance each other's efforts; and when they

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shake and tug; they naturally imagine the tree rocks to and fro, as drunken men upbraid the earth for reeling. They not only cannot pull together, but none of them pull very long at the same rope; they are always for progress, that is, for changing the direction of the pull, and their progress is like that of an infant,—from teething to hooping-cough, and from hooping-cough to measles, and from measles to consumption, and from consumption to the grave; and then as one rope rots, they bury it, and think the tree is rotting; as from the death of one form of sceptical development they go to the birth of another promising child, like Mr. Holyoake at Bradford, who on the 24th of August last, gave "a new development of the principles of free enquirers," and so they take a new voyage, in a new balloon, to see which way the wind blows, which rocks our tree into increased power, as a giant sapling, already the king of the forest. With all their progress they come round to the old place, like a horse in a mill, or a squirrel in a cage, or a weathercock on a steeple—always progressing and never getting on. They would do well if this tree did not stop them; but now let them start one of their own, with a seed out of their *Cabinet*, and let it compete fairly in the great exhibition of all magnificent products.

But these "new developments," that is, digging up the old seeds to sow new ones, are very satisfactory acknowledgments of dissatisfaction with all that they have attempted. Meanwhile, this tree of ours is still a "hale green tree," after two thousand years, and promises to remain so when a thousand more shall have gone. It grows in the soil of human affections and intellect, it grows in a free atmosphere, it makes the atmosphere free and wholesome, it, confessedly, alone could heal the bitter waters of the old world, when Christ planted it; and the renovated part of mankind having grown up with it, and been fostered by it, in the infancy of the world's improvement, still guards it jealously, singing—

> "O! woodman spare that tree,
> Touch not a single bough,
> In youth it sheltered me,
> And I'll protect it now."

It was planted in suffering, it has been watered with blood and tears, it has grown up under the oppression of the combined forces of darkness, priests, and tyrants,—it has become strong, and now stands calmly defying all oppressors, healing all who taste its fruits; and after all the fitful efforts of a variable philosophy, guided to the attack with dark lanterns and Will-o'-the-wisp "developments," it will still remain for the healing and preservation of the nations.

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MR. GRANT:—I beg to propose, and Mr. Holyoake will second, a vote of thanks to the Umpire and the Chairmen.

MR. HOLYOAKE:—I am obliged to Mr. Grant for having proposed, and given me the opportunity of seconding, a vote of thanks to our excellent Umpire, and to the gentlemen who have occupied the Chairs. I think we ought to include the managing Committee: and if I might make the vote so wide, I should say that we owe much to the *British Banner*, the *Christian Times*, the *Nonconformist*, and the *Patriot*, for their very fair reports of this discussion. For myself, I have my own acknowledgments to make both to Mr. Hinton, the umpire, and Mr. Morley, for their very courteous bearing towards myself. I therefore second the motion.

MR. GRANT:—Allow me to say what I was going to say, but there was so much confusion,—that I am happy in sharing Mr. Holyoake's opinion as to the obligations we are under to the gentlemen who have taken so much trouble on the Committees. I know they must have had a great deal of difficulty in the arrangements; and I am sure we have all seen the impartiality and fairness of those gentlemen who have presided over these meetings. Having each their own opinions, they have seen justice done at the same time. I desire also to express my thanks for your kind attention, notwithstanding the very rapid way in which I have spoken in some of those not the most pleasant observations which I have made. Allow me also to say that I hope those who have listened to this discussion will hereafter read the report—read it carefully—then they will forget the disputants, and look only at the argument. And while referring to the report, I think we ought to include the Reporter in the vote of thanks, for he has had the hardest work, and I think he has done it the best. So we had better conclude with three cheers for all of us.

The motion having been carried with acclamation, the UMPIRE said:—It is but courteous to acknowledge the vote of thanks which you have so courteously presented to us. On my own part, and on the part of the two gentlemen on my right and left, we testify our grateful sense of your approbation, and in return express our thanks to you for having behaved so well, and having given us so little trouble.

The proceedings then terminated.

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